

FINDING THE GAPS: PREPAREDNESS FOR PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

A THESIS-PROJECT

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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....iv

ABSTRACTv

Chapter

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	1
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	15
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	38
4. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	66
5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PLANS.....	86

Appendix

A. MASTER OF DIVINITY COURSE REQUIREMENTS.....	95
B. SEMINARY PASTORAL CARE SURVEY	96
C. SEMI-STRUCTURED PASTORAL INTERVIEW.....	97
D. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	98
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	105
VITA	113

TABLES

1. Pastoral Care Courses Required vs. Taken.....	72
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ABSTRACT

“Finding the Gaps: Preparedness for Pastoral Care Ministry” was written to determine the gap in providing good biblical pastoral care from the time of graduating seminary to long tenured pastors. The research considered: course requirements for seminary students in pastoral care, surveys for seminarians, and interviews with pastors to determine how they learned to provide good pastoral care.

The images of pastors and people, theological framework for pastoral care, issues that people face, and Jesus’ ministry were considered. Pastoral care was defined. Conclusions determined need for more pastoral care during seminary, the possibility of a post-seminary residency, and continuing education.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In my ministry context, since I am the Associate Pastor for Congregational Care in a large suburban church, I sought out continuing education courses to inform my ministry that were both theologically and practically oriented. Behold, I could not find any continuing education courses for pastoral care of the congregation. There were several courses on self-care of the pastor, which is an aspect of pastoral care, but not caring for the flock that God has entrusted to me.

In addition to just taking courses, I longed for dialogue and discussion with other pastors about their theology of care. I found several obstacles to connecting with other pastors. Ministry is very busy in a large church, and being a conservative woman in a more liberal denomination seems to be part of the issue. I reached out to many female pastors and found it difficult to have any consistency in meeting together. Additionally, many people in ministry struggle with women and men meeting together for many reasons. One of those reasons is that meeting with people of the opposite gender might appear to be inappropriate and raise questions about the integrity of your ministry. It seems that the busyness of ministry, as well as hyper-vigilant in avoiding any possible misconstruing of intentions, precludes taking time for theological discussion or just connecting with one another in a collegial manner.

With these thoughts in mind, I went searching for a way to begin to answer my questions which I believe are other pastors' questions as well. I decided to look at different Doctor of Ministry programs to see if they would meet the need for both theological reflection and practical knowledge regarding congregational care. Hence, I am working on this thesis-project. Initially, I thought my thesis-project would be providing a theological framework for pastoral

care, but in reading I found several foundational books on the biblical and theological basis of pastoral care. Yet, in the occasional conversations with other pastors, I discovered that they were not aware of advanced continuing education courses specializing in care of the flock. Even among my Doctor of Ministry cohort, there were several long tenured pastors who felt inadequate and in need of further training in pastoral care.

Another aspect I have observed is that newly graduating seminarians and pastors just beginning their ministry struggle with providing good pastoral care. In exploring the reasons for their struggle, several questions have come to the forefront. Are seminarians adequately educated and trained during their education process? With seminaries requiring courses in languages, exegesis, preaching, and theology, it appears that pastoral care is regarded as not that essential. I don't think this is intentional, but it has consequences in regard to the level of preparedness for parish ministry.

Also, since many seminarians enter seminary right after graduating college and are in their early twenties, I wondered to what extent life experience plays a role in their ability to provide good pastoral care? Another question is: Is mentoring in seminary and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) providing adequate pastoral care experience? CPE provides a baseline for some care and begins to help one see who they are and what their issues in ministry might be. CPE in a hospital setting also might help people without a medical background become more comfortable in hospitals and ICU's that have lots of equipment and patients who are very sick. Desensitizing this fear can help the pastors be more comfortable in the presence of sick people and the situations that arise in hospitals. CPE is not required either in all seminaries or denominations, so as a consequence there is not consistent training for seminarians in clinical pastoral care.

Mentored ministry might or might not address the issue of pastoral care and is also not universally required in seminary. The mentoring process will only be as helpful for training in pastoral care as the variety and amount of care that is offered in the mentored ministry units. Some mentored ministry units might not involve any pastoral care and therefore not help the seminarian feel adequately prepared or even know that they are not prepared to provide pastoral care.

Life experience may also play a role in the ability to provide pastoral care. Certain things in life are only learned through experiencing hardship, or illness, or loss, and that usually, though not necessarily, comes with age. Sometimes overcoming difficulties at a young age may make one wiser and more prepared than their years. And conversely, an older person whose life has been devoid of hardships and crises, may not have a clue about appropriate pastoral care for those in these situations.

Our culture also plays a part in the lack of emphasis upon pastoral care in theological education and in continuing education opportunities. Most of our congregations, and recent seminary graduates, seek to develop and design engaging programs, offer more dynamic preaching, and provide popular topics to attract the greatest number of members. Unfortunately, pastoral care isn't often regarded as essential for faith development within a congregation. Our culture has also become technology-obsessed, in that texting and emailing and Facebook are the ways in which the younger generations communicate. This media-driven style of communication has also been embraced by older generations as a necessary means of communicating in today's world. There is an increasing uncomfortableness with communicating via phone calls and face-to-face conversations, and this reality is especially problematic for pastoral care where presence is so important. Texting and emailing do not provide tone of voice,

except in the use of grammar or punctuation which provides emphasis. The telephone provides at least tone of voice, but is lacking body language. Yet, tone of voice, body language and the use of appropriate touch are all important aspects of pastoral care.

Life has also become more complex as time goes by. We are experiencing more violence in everyday life now than in previous generations. Technology has brought everyday experiences of war and crime into our homes. The internet and television have given people opportunities to see and experience sexual assaults, robberies at gunpoint, murder victims, sex trafficking, and other forms of violence at the touch of a button. Video games are now rated for violence and offer people of all ages the ability to kill people and fight wars virtually without the reality of what it does to one's psyche. Culture dictates that we have to be a certain shape and size, wear certain clothing, drive certain cars, and live in certain communities in order to be valued. So, many people struggle with eating disorders, non-suicidal self-injury, and suicide. Or, desiring to avoid, many suppress it or cover it with things that will hopefully make them feel better momentarily. People have the ability to take pills and the difficult issues of life could melt away. Additionally, the addictions to drugs, alcohol, food, pornography, gambling, and shopping are rampant in our society. Even good things in life have taken on a do-more-and-be-better attitude. Examples of this include going to football games every weekend, traveling out of the country for short weekend jaunts, buying more things to show that you are more than you might be able to afford. Most households have two working adults just to make ends meet, and to keep up the facade. Much of this endless striving and keeping up appearances are fueled by the prevalent view of death. Death has become the enemy rather than an inevitable part of life. Some or all of these factors have increased the stress level in people's lives which leads to physical illness, exhaustion and weariness.

In my congregation of 2,000 members there are significant issues in many people's lives, often occurring simultaneously. My parishioners are experiencing a large cross-section of diseases and struggles that impact many members at the same time. These diseases range from minor illnesses that one recovers from to chronic debilitating diseases that alter lifestyle to terminal cancer.

Cancer is a terrifying diagnosis for people to hear. Yet, statistics show that a significant number of people are impacted by this disease. "In 2018, 1,735,350 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in the United States, and 609,640 people will die from cancer annually. There is a higher mortality rate for men than women. In 2016 there were 15.5 million cancer survivors, and it is estimated that this number will increase to 20.3 million in the year 2026."¹ The prevalence of cancer in today's society means that there is a corresponding need for pastoral care in congregations for those who suffer from it.

Another medical issue that many today are facing relates to organ, bone marrow, and stem cell transplant. Issues that transplant candidates will deal with include eligibility, post-transplant regimen, financial cost, emotional strain, and even questions of faith. For example, as eligibility is determined, there is the reality that one may be denied a life-giving organ. One's faith might then question the authority by which other humans make that eligibility decision and then, if denied, there are concerns and fears about dying and death.

The increase of people with special needs is also an increasingly significant issue in congregations. Those with special needs face challenges that are different than families without special needs. Statistics show that those people impacted by special needs has increased significantly. "In 2018-2019, the number of students ages 3 – 21 who received special education

1. American Cancer Society, "Cancer Facts and Figures, 2018", updated 2018, accessed June 4, 2019, Cancer.org.

services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7 million, or 14 percent of all public school students. Among students receiving special education services 33 percent had specific learning disabilities, and 11 percent had autism.² The National Center for educational statistics goes on to say, “A specific learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.”³

Another special need in congregations is that an increasingly significant number of people, ranging in age from people in their fifties to their nineties, suffer with different forms of dementia. According to the World Health Organization, “Worldwide, around 50 million people have dementia, and there are nearly 10 million new cases every year.”⁴ The Alzheimer’s Association in 2019 said that “5.8 Million Americans have Alzheimer’s dementia with 5.6 million of them being over 65 years of age and 200,000 being under 65 years of age.”⁵ These numbers are staggering considering Alzheimer’s Dementia is only one form of dementia, and the cost in both private pay care and hours of care by family members is exorbitant. The increasing number of those who suffer from dementia has far-reaching implications. “Dementia has a

2. National Center for Education Statistics, “The Condition of Education: Students with Disabilities,” updated May 2020, accessed March 23, 2021, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp.

3. “The Condition of Education.”

4. World Health Organization (WHO), “Dementia,” updated September 21, 2020, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia>.

5. Alzheimer’s Association, “Facts and Figures,” last updated March 15, 2019, accessed July 2, 2019, <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/facts-figures>.

physical, psychological, social, and economic impact, not only on people with dementia, but also on their caregivers, families and society at large.”⁶

Another issue that is becoming more and more a pastoral care issue in congregations is that many couples are struggling with infertility or the inability to maintain pregnancies. The CDC reports that “about 6% of married women aged 15 to 44 years in the United States are unable to get pregnant after one year of trying.... Also, about 12% of women aged 15 to 44 years in the United States have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term, regardless of marital status.”⁷ In dealing with infertility, many resort to various fertility treatments which then often result in multiple birth. In many instances, this involves making difficult decisions because of the likelihood of these children being born with physical disabilities. Unexpected death of the child during pregnancy is also a devastating issue that needs to be grieved and pastoral care needs to be available for a significant amount of time.

The issues of sexual identity are also on the rise in the United States and become issues that must be dealt with in the church in a grace-filled and transforming manner. The Williams Institute did a state-by-state study in the United States in 2018 that indicated “a range of 2.7% to 9.8% of state population identified as LGBT.”⁸ With the issue of sexuality there is also the issue of addiction to pornography or past sexual abuse. Much of these two issues—sexual addiction and sexual abuse—remain hidden because of the shame that surrounds them. The National Center for Victims of Crime reports

that child sexual abuse is often not reported and the incidence is greater than what is reported. In 2010 9.2% of victimized children were of sexual assault in nature. One in

6. WHO, “Dementia.”

7. CDC, “Infertility FAQs,” last updated January 16, 2019, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/infertility/index.htm>.

8. UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, “LGBT Data & Demographics,” accessed March 23, 2021, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT#density>.

five girls and one in 20 boys are a victim of child sexual abuse. The self-report of adults shows that 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident. Seventy five percent of victims of sexual abuse or assault were victimized by people that they knew.”⁹

These statistics mean that there are women and men in every congregation that have been sexually abused at one level or another.¹⁰ Further, pornography is an issue that is often hidden and not self-disclosed because of the associated shame that accompanies this addiction. Conquer Series provides statistical information about pornography, particularly within the Christian church:

Over 40 million Americans are regular visitors to pornographic sites.... There are around 42 million pornographic websites.... The porn industry’s annual revenue is more than the NFL, NBA, and MLB combined. It is also more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC.... 56% of American divorces involve one party having an “obsessive interest” in pornographic websites.... 68% of church-going men and over 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis. Of young Christian adults 18-24 years old, 76% actively search for porn.... *Only 7% of pastors say their church has a program to help people struggling with pornography.*¹¹

Deseret News reports that “revenues for the world pornography industry hit an estimated \$97 billion in 2006.”¹²

The issue of grief in the midst of loss is also a paramount concern in pastoral care. Grief is the normal response to any form of loss. There are families who have experienced the decline and death of loved ones, suicide, as well as families who are fractured due to separation and

9. National Center for Victims of Crime, “Child Sexual Abuse Statistics,” accessed March 23, 2021, <https://victimsofcrime.org/child-sexual-abuse-statistics/>.

10. Dan Allender, in his book *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008), has provided the church with a great resource to help people understand the impact of sexual abuse, as well as provide healing for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Dr. Allender provides a portrait of what the effects of abuse are on an individual and yet provides hope for healing and wholeness to occur through faith in Christ.

11. Conquer Series, “15 Mind-Blowing Statistics About Pornography and the Church,” accessed March 23, 2021, <https://conquerseries.com/15-mind-blowing-statistics-about-pornography-and-the-church/>.

12. Geoffrey Fattah, “Porn Industry is Booming Globally,” March 17, 2007, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.deseret.com/2007/3/17/20007997/porn-industry-is-booming-globally#0>.

divorce. Grief is present for parents of children with special needs, whether they are physical, psychological, or emotional, as dreams for themselves or their children are not attained. Grief is also present as one experiences loss of employment, loss of purpose, and loss of reputation. The complex response to loss, grief, can impact one's spiritual journey of faith as well as day to day ability to function in society.

In addition to these physical and emotional health issues pastoral care will need to address the normal aging process. In addition to all the crises in life faced in a congregation, there are also the older members who can no longer get out and about and miss being physically a part of the body of Christ that worships together on a Sunday morning. Many of these people have been active church members who have served God and the local congregation faithfully for a number of years. They need care as well as ways to be connected to the body of Christ that they have loved and served for much of their lives. The current pandemic in 2020, has intensified the problem with these members being more isolated than ever. Since they are at higher risk of contracting a serious form of COVID-19, their ability to interact with other people has become even more limited. So too, with the restrictions on pastoral visitation in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, long term care facilities, and retirement communities, these people who are already somewhat isolated have become even more isolated. The result of this has been increased levels of despair, loneliness, fear, and isolation which can be as deadly as the virus itself.

Given all of these life-challenges and realities, I see a great need for continuing education in good, biblically based pastoral care, training, and mentoring of pastors as vital. And even more so because there is a gap, between newly ordained pastors and long tenured pastors, in their ability to provide good and sound care. Observing this need in the congregation and the need of

pastors, my thesis-project is concerned to identify the gap in providing pastoral care between those who are new to pastoral ministry and those who have served for a long period of time. I hope that identifying the gap will inform and result in the creation of some type of continuing education or mentoring program, enabling pastors to grow in this area of their ministry earlier, rather than later.

In identifying the gap in education and training for pastoral care, it is important to clearly define the nature of good pastoral care. To begin, succinctly, my working definition of pastoral care is “to help people see and experience Christ in the breadth of life, both positive and negative, in good times and difficult times.” Throughout the following the chapters, this definition will be supported, expanded, and nuanced.

Biblical and Theological Framework

In the Biblical and theological chapter of this thesis-project, I consider the image or role of the pastor, the people we serve and Jesus’ ministry of care. The roles of the pastor considered are the biblical images of shepherd, priest and counselor. The images of people considered are those that come from biblical texts referencing God’s people. Jesus’ ministry of care is examined according to the themes of--love, mercy, forgiveness, restoration, questions of faith, confrontation and vulnerability. Much of this content will come from Jesus’ ministry of care to people from all walks of life, who experienced a wide variety of issues and problems. Matthew 25 provides a good picture of those whom Jesus ministers to and whom he wants us to care for in our ministry--the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned.¹³ This list in Matthew, plus the orphan, widow and stranger are identified in Scripture as the vulnerable

13. Matthew 25:31-47 is the entire story of Jesus judgment according to who we cared for in this lifetime. NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) is used throughout this thesis-project unless otherwise specified.

and as those who are to be considered to be of special concern by God's people. Hence, pastoral care is much larger than most people think and includes those in our congregations as well as those in our community and world.

Literature Review

The literature review deals predominately with the pastoral roles and theological framework of various writers on the topic of pastoral care. Additionally, resources related to issues of pastoral care in specific situations will be reviewed. A discussion of Pastoral Counseling (as distinct from pastoral care) is included, as this area of pastoral ministry is specialized and requires additional training to provide competent care for parishioners. Another issue treated in the literature review is self-care for the pastor. This area of a pastor's life can easily be neglected and there is much literature available to help pastors determine what they need to do in order to care for themselves in the midst of the demands of ministry. It is also important to realize that our ability to care well depends upon our connection with God and his creation which includes both nature and people. Finally, I included a thematic, annotated bibliography as an appendix for pastors to have a resource that will be helpful as they care for parishioners facing particular issues in life.

Research Design

My research design is a twofold approach that involves both graduating seminarians and long tenured pastors. Graduating seminarians who are entering the pastorate or pastors who have been in ministry for just a few years were asked to take a survey. Questions were designed to explore the nature of the pastoral care education they received in seminary. There are questions

that relate to their previous educational degrees, work experience and age, that provide a glimpse into life experience that might influence their preparedness for pastoral care ministry. I determined the degree conferred at graduation and how much pastoral care education they received, as well as any mentored ministry units or CPE experiences. Finally, I asked if they felt a preparedness for pastoral care and what might be lacking from their perspective. My hope was to determine if education, mentoring, or life experience influenced their perception of their preparedness to provide good, biblical pastoral care to the members of their congregation. After preparing the survey, I partnered with three seminaries to send out the survey to their graduating students who were going into pastoral ministry. The limitation of the survey was that newly graduated seminarians wouldn't have enough ministry experience to realize they weren't prepared for everything that might come under their purview of ministry. This could be due to naivety or thinking that pastoral care might not be a large portion of their ministry. It could also be due to a limited life experience that informs their thinking.

The second portion of my research was a semi-structured interview with long tenured pastors. The questions focused on how much of their ministry is pastoral care, and what they know now that they wish they knew earlier in ministry. I asked questions related to their definition of pastoral care and how they became more proficient at providing care to their congregation. To get at that information more fully, I asked them what they hoped to happen in pastoral care. Finally, I asked if they sensed a need for continuing education or mentored ministry in the field of pastoral care. I interviewed ten pastors who have served in ministry for a long time and have provided pastoral care in significant ways. These interviews were recorded and then transcribed in order to analyze the results. The limitation of these interviews was that they were harder to quantify as they were more narrative in nature than the surveys. Furthermore,

I received more information than could be readily analyzed. Additionally, I gained information that I didn't ask for.

In my research, I also looked at several seminaries and their pastoral care and mentored ministry requirements for students who are entering pastoral ministry. I anticipated this would give me a sense of the importance placed on pastoral care by seminaries. I also had conversations with some seminary professors who expressed a concern that pastoral care requirements need to be fuller in breadth, depth, and scope. But again, for the seminaries, the question of, "How do we do this with everything else that needs to be learned," arises. So, I compared the amount of other coursework to required pastoral care courses. I broke it down into five categories. The categories are 1. biblical studies and preaching, 2. theology and ethics, 3. church history, mission and leadership, 4. pastoral care and education, and 5. electives. I also have a section considering mentored ministry units and CPE.

Conclusion and Future Plans

My hope is that this research will answer the question, "What is the gap in the ability to provide good pastoral care at the beginning of ministry versus later in pastoral ministry?" In answering this question, some pastoral care continuing education, or a mentoring process, could be created and implemented for new pastors early in their ministry, thus providing their parishioners with good care when life is difficult and challenging as well as celebrating when life is good and positive. Additionally, giving suggestions for and the creation of continuing education courses could also serve as an opportunity for longer tenured pastors to hone their caring skills, and thereby improve their pastoral care. So, the creation of continuing education curriculum, as well as mentoring experiences, that are both individual and group oriented, are the

next steps after this thesis-project. These educational opportunities, when developed, would provide the opportunity for pastors to have collegial interaction around the issues of pastoral care. The continuing education courses could also be devoted to specific life issues, assisting pastors in acquiring a general knowledge of issues that may not have been covered in seminary, and/or addressing pastoral care concerns that are of immediate and pressing concern for those in the course.

The results of this research will be provided to seminaries to assist them developing curricula that might provide for a more intentional process of teaching pastoral care ministry. Churches with pastors that provide good pastoral care could partner with specific seminaries to provide units of mentored ministry in pastoral care. Also, churches that have an educational ministry focus could be encouraged to provide the opportunity for one year post seminary residencies in pastoral care. Individual pastors could use the information in this thesis-project to consider their own pastoral care ministry and how it might be improved. Getting this information to individual pastors could be accomplished in conjunction with denominational meetings and seminaries.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Several questions about the biblical basis and theological framework of pastoral care need to be considered. Who is the pastor and what are their roles in pastoral care? Who are the people that pastors serve? What does good pastoral care look like? What is the definition of pastoral care based on Scripture?

Images and Roles of Pastor

In looking at Biblical resources, it is important to recognize that pastors are to be followers of Christ. In following Jesus, we are to reflect his character, so biblical images of God are relevant to the role of the pastor, as they reflect who God is to his people. Some of the positive biblical images of God are the Great Physician, Teacher, Friend, Redeemer, Healer, Provider, the Mother Hen who protects her chicks, and Protector. There are other images that are problematic for some, e.g., the Leader of the Army, the Holy One, the Just, and the Judge. These images, though perhaps considered negative, convey a very important role of the pastor as one who calls people to live righteously before the Lord God.

The most prominent image of pastor in Scripture is Shepherd, as seen in John 10, Psalm 23, and Ezekiel 34. Jesus is speaking in John 10 as He says, “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”¹ The image of shepherd here denotes care of the flock. For the flock, there is entrance into the kingdom of God, protection, knowing and being known by the Shepherd. There is self-giving and self-sacrificing seen in Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, when he lays down his life for his people, and for those that don’t know him.

1. John 10:11, 14-15.

The entirety of this story in John 10:1-21 shows the intimacy between the Shepherd and the sheep. Further, Jesus says, “The Gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all of his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.”² This implies a personal knowledge of the sheep by the Shepherd. So too, it is vital for a pastor to know the names of the parishioners, and beyond that to know their stories and struggles and situations and celebrations. For in knowing their parishioners, pastors can then lead them more effectively into spiritual growth, communion with God, and living life according to God’s will.

The Shepherd also provides outreach to those outside the church or to those on the periphery. “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them back also, and they will listen to my voice.”³ Most churches have many people who live on the fringe of the Church and have their name on the membership role but haven’t darkened the doors in a good number of years, or they come just at Christmas and Easter, or for weddings, baptisms or funerals. God calls his undershepherds, his pastors, to reach out to these, as well as to those in the community who might not yet know Christ as Savior.

The image of Shepherd is again presented in Psalm 23 where the Psalmist calls him Lord. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.”⁴ The Shepherd provides rest and nourishment for his people, as he leads them to the water to drink and be satisfied, and to the green pasture to eat and be fed, as well as to rest. Rest, food and water are vital for life, and the leading of the Lord is vital for spiritual health and restoration of the soul. The Psalmist continues, “He leads me in

2. John 10:3-4.

3. John 10:16.

4. Psalm 23:1-3a.

right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.”⁵ The Shepherd is with his people, in the darkest valley, in the highest mountain, in evil and in good. The presence of a pastor is a representation that God is with his people in these moments as well. The Psalm continues, showing us that God leads in his way, and when his people stray or are led away, he returns them with his rod for discipline and his staff for guidance. So too, for the pastoral role, being with God’s people is important in the midst of a parishioner’s struggles and celebrations. This idea is reinforced in Psalm 78 and Jeremiah 3.⁶

For the shepherd who leads the flock astray with false teachings, Scripture prescribes judgment as seen in Ezekiel 34:1-24, Jeremiah 23:1-4 and 50:6, and Zechariah 10:2b-3a. “Therefore, the people wander like lost sheep; they suffer for lack of a shepherd. My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders.”⁷ It is important for the pastor to lead the flock in God’s ways, so that God’s people will have spiritual growth that leads to life.

Another Scriptural image of pastor is priest. The priest represents God to the people, and the people to God. Jesus is seen as the high priest in Hebrews 4:14-5:8. “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death.”⁸ Jesus the priest brought prayers and supplication to God on behalf of his people. He also was called by God, just as the pastor/priest is called by God to be responsible for his or her congregation in the matters that pertain to God. Hebrews 8:1-12 also speaks of the high priest as mediator between God and his people. So too, the pastor/priest is to bring people to

5. Psalm 23:3b-4.

6. Psalm 78:70-72; Jeremiah 3:15.

7. Zechariah 10:2b-3a.

8. Hebrews 5:7.

God through Christ, enabling them to see Jesus as forgiver and life giver. As priest, pastors are to bring their people to God in prayer and supplication.

In the Old Testament, Moses was the priest for Israel. God called Moses to deliver his people out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt. Moses and God were in communion and communication throughout the journey through the wilderness. God spoke to Moses for the benefit of the people, and Moses spoke to God on behalf of the Israelites. God told Moses how the people are to behave in the presence of God and Moses prepared the people so that they might live lives pleasing to God. Moses gives the laws of God to the people, and it is summarized in the *Shema*, “Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”⁹ It is also the law that is seen in Leviticus, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁰ This law is so important it is repeated in the New Testament in Matthew 22:37-40. It is the greatest commandment, the law of love. It is Moses the priest who is given these laws and words to give to the people so that they might live according to God’s ways. It is the priest who hears these words and brings these words to the people. Because the people sin by worshipping the golden calf, Moses, as priest, pleads for the Israelites in Exodus 33. In salvation and sin, Moses represented God to the people and the people to God as priest.

The final image of pastor to examine is that of Counselor/Advocate. A counselor is “an advisor, or an attorney, and one who advises on personal matters.”¹¹ An advocate is “a person who pleads for one on behalf of another, or an intercessor.”¹² Finally, a mediator is “someone

9. Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

10. Leviticus 19:18.

11. Robert B. Costello, ed., *Webster’s College Dictionary*, s.v. “counselor.”

12. *Webster’s*, s.v. “advocate.”

who serves as an intermediary between two persons.”¹³ Ultimately, the image of pastor here is one who guides, brings comfort, and intercedes for their parishioners.

The supreme example of this image, Counselor/Advocate, is seen most clearly in the life of Jesus the Messiah. In Isaiah, the Messiah, Jesus, the One to come is called, “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”¹⁴ God is a wonderful counselor who teaches and comforts. This is seen in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 1 where Paul tells the Corinthians,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations [comforts], who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering.¹⁵

Paul here speaks of the comfort that he receives from God to be used for others to come to salvation and to be comforted. Pastors must be willing to suffer and be comforted by God so that others might be comforted and find salvation and hope through Christ from the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of John reveals God’s promise of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth, the Advocate or the Counselor.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [Counselor] to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.¹⁶

13. Webster’s, s.v. “mediator.”

14. Isaiah 9:6.

15. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. Other versions of Scripture substitute comfort for console or consolation.

16. John 14:16-17,26. Some translations use advocate and others use counselor.

As he promised, the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer, and has come to remind them of what God has told them, to comfort them, and to teach them how to live a life pleasing to God. This has at least two implications for pastors. First, pastors are to recognize that the Holy Spirit is always with them and always with those whom they tend. Pastors need to listen for His voice and to trust his words of comfort and truth. Pastors also have to remember that the ones they are caring for have the Spirit within them, and pastors need to help them rely on God and not themselves as pastors. Secondly, pastors are to teach and remind and comfort those whom God has called them to care for, because that is the role of the Counselor.

As Advocate, the Spirit meets us not only in our distress and struggle, but in our sin. In 1 John we see that we have such an Advocate with the Father: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”¹⁷ Jesus pleads on our behalf for our restoration from sin. Pastors need to offer that same restoration to people who have sinned and have confessed their sin and repented of that sin. Confession and absolution are powerful transformative moments in people’s lives. It is a place where they experience wholeness, humility, and love as the grace of forgiveness and restoration are extended.

The People That Pastors Serve

Pastors need to know the people that they serve, who they are and how they are seen by God. Scripture provides many descriptions of who we are and how we are, as God’s people, in relationship to God and to one another. The primary image is that we are created in the image of

17. 1 John 2:1-2.

God. Yet, intertwined in this image is sin, which sometimes makes being human feel like we have a split personality. This is what C.S. Lewis has to say about humanity:

It is a serious thing to live in a society, of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or the other of these destinations.¹⁸

Human beings live in both the wonder and glory of being created in the image of God and being fallen people who have a propensity to sin.

Genesis tells us that we are made in God's image. "So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them."¹⁹ A similar passage is found in Genesis 2:

Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. But for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²⁰

God created humanity in his image and gave them life and everything that they needed to be fruitful. Every person, whether redeemed or not, has the image of God imprinted on them and in them.

God's people are reflections of God to the world, yet, as fallen creatures, that reflection is dimmed by sin. We might desire to do good things, but we fall short and can commit the evilest acts. In Genesis, the fall of humankind occurs so quickly—only one chapter after their creation in the "image of God." The serpent tempts the woman to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge

18. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975), 14.

19. Genesis 1:26-28a.

20. Genesis 2:7, 20-23.

of good and evil that God had commanded Adam not to eat.²¹ The serpent twists the words of God, and both Adam and Eve do as they are commanded not to do, and sin enters the world. As descendants of Adam and Eve, each of us carries within us the guilt of original sin, in addition to the actual personal sins we commit. The effects of the fall permeate all of history in every way. It affects our inner life as Paul so clearly states in Romans, “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”²² If Paul struggled, so too we struggle to be transformed by Christ from sin. Every person has sinned, and Christ has given himself freely for our redemption.

Yet, in the midst of sin there is hope. Those who have acknowledged Jesus’ death on the cross and have found redemption in Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. We have already seen in John 14 that the Holy Spirit was sent to dwell in believers, to teach and remind us of what God through Jesus Christ has done for us. The power of the Holy Spirit is amazing for his ability to transform the life of a believer. Paul enlightens the Ephesians about the Spirit’s power as he prays for them:

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.²³

The amazing power of the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives within every believer. Yet, believers in Jesus still sin and commit wrong behavior. So that leaves us with a

21. Genesis 2:17.

22. Romans 7:15.

23. Ephesians 1:17-20.

propensity to sin, yet the power that lives within us, the Holy Spirit, transforms our hearts and minds to live more and more like Jesus every day.

In addition to being created in the image of God, Scripture portrays other names for God's people—sheep, children, sons and daughters of the King, and the body of Christ. Christians are also known as saints, the bride of Christ, chosen people, beloved, the Church, followers of the Way, disciples, and believers. Christ also calls us friends, to whom he's given a new name, Christians. All these names are important for pastors as they interact with their parishioners, reminding them of how they are to interact with those God has entrusted to their care.

There are many examples in Scripture of God's people being called "sheep," e.g., John 10 and Psalm 100. "Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."²⁴ There are several other Psalms that speak about God the Shepherd, and his people, the sheep. "Then he [God] led out his people like sheep, guided them in the wilderness like a flock. He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid."²⁵ The books of Isaiah and Micah also make reference to God's people as sheep. In the promise for the remnant of Israel God says, "I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the survivors of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture; it will resound with people."²⁶ God is a gracious Shepherd who knows how much tending sheep need, in order to be safe and healthy and productive.

Ezekiel 34 is another wonderful passage about the relationship between sheep and shepherd. God's care of His sheep is seen in abundance in this text. The final verse, Ezekiel

24. Psalm 100:3.

25. Psalm 78:52-53.

26. Micah 2:12, see Isaiah 53:6.

34:31, is a personal intimate conversation between shepherd and sheep: “You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God.”²⁷ What a promise from Scripture! God’s people are sheep who have a marvelous Shepherd, one who provides everything that is needed for both temporal and eternal life. The pastor needs to embrace and embody this sheep and shepherd relationship as they care for and tend God’s people.

Other names for God’s people reflect a familial relationship—children, sons and daughters of the King, and brother of Christ. God’s people are a family. We are brothers and sisters who live together, eat together, serve together, worship together, and sometimes even sin together. As families have a connection through parentage and bloodline, God’s people are connected through the salvific blood of Christ. The Apostle John calls the people “little children”, or “children,” or God’s children.”²⁸ “Beloved, we are God’s children, now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.”²⁹ Again, although God’s people don’t always live the way they should, they remain God’s children, family, sons and daughters of the King of kings. That image of being a child of the King conveys a most amazing truth. Not relegated to the outer courts or outer limits of the King’s realm, God’s people have immediate personal access to the King. John’s gospel recounts, “But to all who received him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.”³⁰ As Jesus is the Son of God, so too as children of God, Christ is our brother. We are and have family, we are sons and daughters of the King! As

27. Ezekiel 34:31.

28. 1 John 2:1,12,18, 28.

29. 1 John 3:2.

30. John 1:12.

God's family, we are expected to live as such by loving, by forgiving, by holding one another accountable, and by worshipping and serving together.

God's people are also referred to in Scripture as the body of Christ, the Church, disciples, believers and followers of the Way, titles that denote both source and manner of life. The most well-known passages referring to the body of Christ are found in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4—passages that speak about the gifts that are given to believers to be used to build up the body of Christ, the Church. “For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”³¹ So too, the Romans passage connects the individual members together into one body, united together by Christ and the Spirit. First Corinthians 12 helps emphasizes that we are to work together, not putting one gift above another or one person above another. As the body of Christ, we are related to and need one another. The Ephesians passage teaches that Christ is the head of the body and we, his people, are knit together to grow in faith and hope and love. Being knit together, we are not to come apart, but to work together as one to live and move and serve one another and the world. Finally, God's people are called the Church, built upon the sure foundation of Christ. Peter declares that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God.”³² In Jesus' response to Peter, he says, “Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”³³ The Church is the people of God, built upon the sacrifice of Christ, the Messiah.

31. Romans 12:4-5, see also 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Ephesians 4:4-6, 15-16.

32. Matthew 16:13-16.

Other Scriptural names given to God's people reflect the intimacy of God's relationship with them—the chosen people of God, the saints, the beloved, the bride of Christ, and Christian. Furthermore, in John's gospel, Jesus uses the metaphor of vine and branches to denote his intimate and life-giving relationship with his people.

In 1 Peter we are identified as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”³⁴ So claimed by God, his chosen people have also been set apart, made holy, and therefore are called saints. Every believer, not just for people who do great things for God, are called saints. So, Paul greets the Corinthian Christians in this way, “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.”³⁵ Paul teaches that the saints are set apart for the work of God, it will not necessarily be easy, yet, they will endure and overcome because of their redemption in Christ.³⁶

God's people are also referred to as “the bride of Christ.” John the Baptist answers a discussion about Jesus with these words: “I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and heard him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice.”³⁷ John the Baptist calls Christ the bridegroom, and his followers the bride. So too, in Revelation, John writes, “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure – for the

33. Matthew 16:17-18.

34. 1 Peter 2:9.

35. 1 Corinthians 1:2, see also Colossians 1:11-12.

36. See also Psalm 31:23.

37. John 3:28-29.

fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”³⁸ As brides are excited about the love that the bridegroom has for her, so, the church, the bride of Christ, should be excited about the love that Christ, their bridegroom, has for them.

Another name for God’s people is the beloved, which is “dearly loved, or dear to the heart.”³⁹ Paul quotes Hosea in Romans, saying, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’ And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they shall be called children of the living God.”⁴⁰ Even in the midst of their sinfulness, God calls his people “beloved.” In caring for God’s people, then, pastors must both reflect to and honor parishioners as God’s beloved.

Those whom God calls his beloved are also sinners. Jesus speaks about John the Baptist to a crowd:

But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.⁴¹

Throughout Scripture, Jesus interacts with sinners—the woman caught in adultery, the calling of Levi the tax collector, the sinful woman who anoints Jesus, and the disciples themselves. Jesus’ presence with sinners is a gracious act of God. Jesus came to seek and to save and to redeem and to bless. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the

38. Revelation 19:7-9.

39. *Webster’s*, s.v. “beloved.”

40. Romans 9:25-26. See also Colossians 3:12.

41. Matthew 11:16-19.

world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”⁴² Jesus came to give life and enables people to be freed from the guilt and weight of sin by his love and grace. Pastors are not to ignore sin, but address it in ways that encourage abundant, victorious living as children of God.

The people that pastors are called to care for are followers of Christ given a new name and called to live as a new creation. Christians are to be “as a Christ” to their neighbors, imitating Christ in their attitudes and behavior. This is what Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!”⁴³

All of the Scriptural names for God’s people are important for pastors to know, to honor, and to have in the forefront of their ministry in order to assist their people in living faithful Christian lives. The importance of the name is that it shows the relationship God has with his people. People can live differently if they know and embrace who and whose they are. Belonging to Christ, even in the midst of our sin, should transform people and free them to be who God has created them to be.

Good Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is built upon the images of pastor in Scripture and the names that God calls his people, as well as Jesus’ ministry. In addition, pastoral care is seen in Old Testament passages that relate to confrontation, reconciliation and care of the widow, orphan and stranger who are the vulnerable in society. In Jesus’ ministry, his care is extended to all people, no matter their station in life, their faith, their socioeconomic position, their education, or their ability.

42. John 3:16-17.

43. 1 Corinthians 5:17.

Jesus extends his grace and love to all. Also, in his ministry, Jesus is out and about in the community, and at the synagogue preaching and teaching and healing. He goes to the people, and the people come to him.

There are many aspects of Jesus' ministry that are instructive for pastors in providing pastoral care and ministry. There are two aspects of Jesus' ministry that greatly impact the pastor. These two aspects are self-care and shared ministry.

The task of pastoral care is much too big to do alone, and because the pastor needs energy and strength to provide care for others, they must also practice self-care. In the gospels, Jesus went away by himself to pray, to fast, and to connect with the Father. This happens in the wilderness before Jesus' ministry begins and it happens along the way as Jesus teaches, heals and performs miracles. For example, after feeding the five thousand, "he went up the mountain by himself to pray."⁴⁴ We also see this pattern of praying and coming away as the crucifixion looms ahead of Jesus: "He came and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them 'Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.' Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed."⁴⁵ The little words "as was his custom" show us that Jesus went away regularly, in solitude, or with a few, to pray and to connect with the Father. This coming away happens particularly before the crucifixion. Jesus is aware of the difficulty that is coming, and he is preparing himself for the Cross. So too, pastors, should set aside time regularly and periodically for renewal and in preparation for their particular ministries.

The second aspect of good pastoral care, built upon Jesus' model of ministry, is that he shared his ministry with others. He called and chose twelve disciples to do ministry with him.

44. Matthew 14:23,

45. Luke 22:39-46. See also Matthew 26:36-45, Mark 14:32-42, John 17:1-25.

These men were set apart and sent to heal and proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. “Then Jesus summoned the twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.”⁴⁶ Jesus prepared these leaders for their ministry. He taught, he empowered, and he sent them on their mission to show and tell others of the healing power of Jesus. Jesus again sends the disciples in Matthew 10:5-15 (also Mark 6:6-13 or Luke 9:1-6) and he sends the seventy in Luke 10:1-12. He gives the great commission in Matthew 28:16-20 and reinstates Peter to feed his sheep in John 21:15-19. These are examples of men, but women also shared ministry with Jesus. Jesus commends Mary for learning, Martha for serving, the Samaritan woman for evangelizing, the women who anointed him for burial, Lydia opening her home in hospitality, and Priscilla and Aquila for teaching and rebuking. Both men and women are called to share in ministry with Jesus and with pastors.

The disciples also realized that they couldn’t look after everyone, and they called upon Stephen and six others to set up ministry to the vulnerable widows and orphans. Acts 6:5 is the selection of these men. “What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicoclaus, a proselyte of Antioch.”⁴⁷ Pastors need to realize that they can’t provide all the care that every parishioner needs and therefore an aspect of pastoral care is for the pastors themselves to train others in the congregation to provide care.

Beyond self-care and shared ministry there are other aspects of pastoral care modeled upon Jesus’ ministry. First, Jesus heals all types of diseases—physical, emotional, and spiritual. “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of

46. Matthew 10:1.

47. Acts 6:1-7 is the entire story of the choosing of these men to care for the widows and orphans.

the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.”⁴⁸ Secondly, Jesus exhibits many different emotions and characteristics of care along the way—mercy, compassion, forgiveness, confrontation, restoration of community, faith, obedience, and trust. Thirdly, Jesus often uses questions when he encounters people. Often, these questions led to a deeper level of healing rather than the superficial healing that is asked for in the moment.

Jesus’ ministry often occurs “on the way.” While Jesus’ ministry happens in synagogues, it also happens as he is headed from one place to another. We see this in the healing of the leader of the synagogue’s daughter, the woman with the issue of blood, the two blind men, and a mute demoniac.⁴⁹ “After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them.”⁵⁰ This is what frequently happens in pastoral care. The days turn out differently than one had planned. Someone drops by the office. There is an unexpected phone call that someone has been taken to the hospital, or been in an accident, or even died to this life. In the midst of a general conversation, someone will say, “Oh by the way pastor, my daughter has just been diagnosed with cancer,” or “My wife and I are having struggles in our marriage.” Pastoral care, more often than not, happens “along the way.”

As Jesus did ministry along the way, he reflected the characteristics of God, especially that God is a loving God. That is the overarching theme of Scripture and the life of Jesus. One sees this in John 3:16, but also in 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5:22-23, and of course in the greatest commandment found in Matthew 22:34-40. God has called pastors to love God and to

48. Matthew 4:23.

49. Matthew 9:18-34.

50. Matthew 15:29-30.

love their congregation as Jesus loves them in the midst of both glory and sin. Such love is not sentimental and gushy but is strong and caring and sometimes confrontational. Jesus didn't let his disciples get away with sin and wrong behavior. Jesus rebuked Peter right after Peter declared Jesus to be the Son of the living God. Peter says, "God forbid it, Lord!" after Jesus foretold his death. Jesus' response to Peter is, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."⁵¹ That was the loving thing for Jesus to do with Peter, because he knew that Peter needed to come to grips with his death and resurrection if he was going to lead the church forward. This is also seen in the story of Nathan confronting David about his sin with Bathsheba. It is the kind of confrontative love that results in confession of sin and praying, as David prayed in Psalm 51, create in him a clean heart, and put a new and right spirit within him.⁵²

After love, mercy is the next quality that is seen in Jesus' healing ministry. Although each of the healings demonstrates mercy, mercy is seen most clearly in Matthew 20 in the healing of the two blind men. The blind men along the road shouted to Jesus, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David."⁵³ They asked for mercy three times. Jesus' response was filled with mercy. "Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately, they regained their sight and followed him."⁵⁴ This mercy was granted for no other reason than Jesus caring for these two men. The response of the blind men, now healed, was faith and obedience in following Jesus. Their hearts were changed in that encounter with Jesus, and they lived differently.

51. Matthew 16:22-23. See also 2 Samuel 12:1-23.

52. Psalm 51.

53. Matthew 20:30.

54. Matthew 20:34.

Again, mercy and ministry is seen in the healing of the ten lepers. Ten are healed and one returns to give thanks:

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way, your faith has made you well."⁵⁵

The one leper's response was gratitude, worship and faith. Mercy is important in pastoral care as we interact with people who are in distress to draw them into a deeper relationship with Christ.

Another aspect of pastoral care is forgiveness. The woman caught in adultery is forgiven. Her accusers, scribes and Pharisees, bring her to Jesus, not out of love, but out of condemnation and to test Jesus. They were using her to make a point, but Jesus responds to the woman in forgiveness and to the leaders of the community with quiet confrontation. Jesus says this to the leaders, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."⁵⁶ None responded, but ultimately all went away in silence. Jesus then says this to the woman, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."⁵⁷ Jesus' lack of condemnation is his extension of forgiveness for her sin, and his admonishment to live a new life is a call to repentance.

Another passage dealing with forgiveness is the anointing of Jesus by a sinful woman. The woman stands behind Jesus, weeping with an alabaster jar of ointment, and bathes Jesus' feet with her tears, and dries them with her hair. She kisses his feet and anoints them with the ointment. The Pharisee is outraged by this action. Jesus, on the other hand, rebukes the Pharisee

55. Luke 17:11-19.

56. John 8:7.

57. John 8:10-11.

for not providing even the least amount of hospitality.⁵⁸ Jesus responds to the Pharisee, “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven, hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”⁵⁹ To the woman, Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”⁶⁰ Jesus offers forgiveness to all. The Pharisee refuses Jesus’ forgiveness. Those at the table question who Jesus is rather than receive forgiveness. The woman, on the other hand, has recognized her sin and by faith come to Jesus. Her faith and forgiveness are recognized publicly by Jesus in front of her condemners. This woman’s response is faith and love and worship. Good pastoral care should have as its goal the same response.

With forgiveness comes restoration, to both God and to the community. The story of the Samaritan woman at the well is a wonderful story of such restoration. The woman is an outcast due to her sinful life. She has had five husbands and the man she is now living with is not her husband. Jesus draws her into conversation and asks her questions.⁶¹ After the encounter, she returns to Samaria and says to the townspeople, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done. He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”⁶² The people of the town followed her back to Jesus, and “many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.’”⁶³ The

58. Luke 7:36-50. This is the entire story of the sinful woman anointing Jesus.

59. Luke 7:47.

60. Luke 7:48, 50.

61. John 4:1-42.

62. John 4:29.

63. John 4:42.

Samaritan woman was restored to God through Jesus the Messiah, and then because of her belief and bringing others to hear Jesus she was restored to her community. This woman who wouldn't risk getting water with the members of the community returned to have conversations with the people who condemned her, and she brought them to Jesus to find salvation for themselves. She couldn't contain her joy of salvation and her restoration to life with both God and her community. So too, pastors, need to help the outcast be restored to God and to community. The restoration of Peter by Jesus in John 21:15-19 is another example of this. Pastors need to remember that sin doesn't prevent any of us from doing great things for God and living a life of repentance and love. Peter lived that life of love by feeding Jesus' sheep and leading the church. People in our congregations need love, mercy, forgiveness and restoration, as they struggle with temptations and sin, are vulnerable and have questions of faith.

Throughout Scripture, pastoral sensitivity and care is also directed toward the vulnerable in society. The vulnerable are the ill, the elderly, children, or those diagnosed with diseases that are chronic and impair their ability to care for themselves and make sound decisions. In Scripture we see these people as orphans, widows and aliens or strangers. Widows, orphans and strangers were on the outskirts of society and had difficulty providing for themselves in the patriarchal society of the Ancient Near East. Their families had to look out for them, and when there was a good king in the land, the orphans, widows, and strangers fared well.

In Matthew 25 the least of these are the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned.⁶⁴ These are people that live on the fringe of society and have difficulty caring for themselves. God calls his people to care for these in a special way. There are also several passages in the Old Testament that reflect concern for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Psalm 146 offers a wonderful description of a caring God, who looks after all of those

64. Matthew 25:31-47.

who are vulnerable: God “executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.”⁶⁵ In both the Old and New Testaments, God commands his people to care for the vulnerable in society.⁶⁶ Because the vulnerable can easily be taken advantage of, pastoral care and the ministry of the church to them, embraces both provision and protection.

Finally, pastoral care also deals those who question their faith. A biblical model of this is that of Thomas.⁶⁷ Thomas, who had not been with the other disciples when Jesus had appeared to them after his resurrection, refuses to believe that the disciples have seen Jesus, insisting, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”⁶⁸ The following week, Jesus appears again to the disciples and he says to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”⁶⁹ Thomas’ response is one of belief in Jesus. Pastoral care to those who doubt, and to those who question their faith, should aim for the same result.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus used questions in exploring the needs and situations of those whom he encountered. In John 5:1-18 Jesus heals a man who has been ill for 38 years. He

65. Psalm 146:7-9. See also Exodus 22:22-23 and Deuteronomy 10:18-19.

66. Matthew 25 and James 1:7.

67. John 20:24-29.

68. John 20:25.

69. John 20:27.

asks this man, “Do you want to be made well?”⁷⁰ This man had been ill for a very long time, and the question causes the man to consider if he really wants to be healed. Pastors sometimes need to wonder if their parishioners desire to have their lives changed. Sometimes it is easier for one to stay ill or in sin than it is to change. Jesus uses questions to disarm and to ascertain what is going on with people. Such questions are a wonderful way to help people come to see themselves and the relationship that they have with Jesus and others.

All of these passages show Jesus’ ministry was motivated by love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and restoration. The positive responses to Jesus’ ministry were repentance, worship, gratitude, faith, obedience and love. The negative responses were walking away, continuing in sin, and rebellion. In and through pastoral care, pastors, reflecting Jesus, should cultivate the positive responses—growth and transformation.

Good pastoral care is exercised by a pastor who is aware of themselves, aware of God’s work in their lives, and aware of the members of their congregation. It is a vital area of ministry for which one must not only be prepared, but continually growing in and sharpening of one’s skills. Paul’s admonition to Timothy, in regard to preaching and proclaiming the Word, applies to pastoral care. Paul says this, “Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable, convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.”⁷¹ Pastors need to be persistent in our care, making sure the Word, both Scripture and Jesus, are central to our message of hope and forgiveness that is found in God.

70. John 5:6.

71. 2 Timothy 4:2.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many authors and books that provide a theological framework to help pastors form their own theology of pastoral care. These sources, that span the breadth of pastoral care, address care in worship, teaching, counseling, preaching, spiritual direction, self-care, and shared ministry, as well as specific issues that impact parishioners. In addition, there is literature that addresses the crafting of mentoring programs and continuing education opportunities to assist pastors in continued growth in pastoral care.

Theological Framework

There are several resources from basic practices to in-depth theological discussion in pastoral care literature. Bruce Peterson's *Foundations of Pastoral Care* is a good, basic book that provides a framework for providing pastoral care to parishioners. Peterson's book emphasizes the role of the pastor as the shepherd of God's people, with Jesus being the Great and Good Shepherd, in whom pastors find life for themselves and their flock.¹ Peterson says this about moments of crisis: "[Pastors] stand humbly as under-shepherds of the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and at the moment become conduits or dispensers of God's grace."² Many other theological pastoral care books talk about shepherds and sheep and are helpful in showing

1. Bruce L. Peterson, *Foundations of Pastoral Care* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2007).

2. Peterson, *Foundations of Pastoral Care*, 20.

pastors how to be the under-shepherds that God calls them to be. The image of sheep also helps pastors see themselves as people, and to see the people of their flocks as God sees them.³

Peterson also uses the image of Jesus going to people to provide pastoral care.⁴ So, too, pastors visit at hospitals, in rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, private homes, and a myriad of other places. Just as Jesus went out and about to minister to people, the pastor is to go out and about to see people. Peterson affirms the ministry of visitation as one communicates to the people visited that the church values and cares about them, even, and especially, when they can no longer attend.⁵ Older members who are now home bound are often the people who built the churches in which pastors serve and are deserving of continued care from pastor and congregation. This ministry, according to Peterson, is the ministry of presence.⁶

Peterson divides care into the categories of comfort and peace.⁷ In care, pastors so often can't change any of the life circumstances of their flock, but they can offer God's comfort and his peace in the midst of life's challenges. This counsel abounds in Scripture and should be used regularly as pastors provide pastoral care.⁸

3. Timothy Laniak has written two books about shepherds and sheep: *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Forty Daily Reflections on Biblical Leadership* (Charlotte, NC: Shepherd Leader Publications, 2007), and *Shepherds After my Own Heart: Pastoral Leadership and Traditions in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2006). They are both useful as devotionals and for reflecting on how to live out their leadership as pastors. W. Phillip Keller has written a short little book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970) in which he considers the nature of sheep and shows how sheep need to be tended. Both of these authors have spent time with sheep and shepherds. Keller is a shepherd himself, and Laniak spent a sabbatical in the Middle East being with the shepherds who tended their flocks in the desert. In that role of under-shepherd, pastors represent God to the individuals for whom we care. Much of pastoral care is provided in crisis and chronic care where grace upon grace is needed.

4. Peterson, “Providing Pastoral Soul Care” in *Foundations of Pastoral Care*.

5. Peterson, “Pastoral Care as Shepherd” in *Foundations of Pastoral Care*.

6. Peterson, “Pastoral Care as Shepherd” in *Foundations of Pastoral Care*.

7. Peterson, “Providing Pastoral Soul Care” in *Foundations of Pastoral Care*.

8. Psalm 23, Psalm 46, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

This book highlights the most important aspect of pastoral care, that is nurturing the flock both corporately and individually. Care is certainly more of an individual process, although it does happen corporately in worship. Peterson also quotes many other authors who are well known, including Benner, Oden, Frye, and Baxter, who are good resources to better understand pastoral care.

Thomas Oden's series on pastoral care helps the pastor think theologically and reflectively from his own theological framework and the writings of the church fathers. His *Classical Pastoral Care: Pastoral Counsel* is very helpful, particularly his reflections on the early church fathers and the reformers. This book helps the pastor to place pastoral care in the context of tradition and Scripture. Overall, this book provides a theological basis for good pastoral care.

In chapter one, “Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of a Helping Relationship”, Oden speaks of five points that provide effective relational aspects of pastoral care. They are:

1. Accurate empathic listening
2. Congruent, open awareness of one's own experiencing process or trusting one's own soul which enables self-disclosure
3. Unconditional accepting love
4. Rigorous self-examination
5. Comic insight.⁹

Oden closely intertwines therapy and ministry and defines both as being involved in healing, helping, and serving. Oden also emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding. Being understood by someone can have a profound effect on one's journey to healing through Christ. For pastors, self-disclosure has to have boundaries and appropriate places, for ministry isn't about the pastor, but is about God and the persons receiving care.

Regarding empathic listening, Oden says,

9. Thomas Oden, *Classical Pastoral Care: Pastoral Counsel*, Classical Pastoral Care Series, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 7-47.

The incarnation was viewed as the overarching pattern of the willingness of God to enter fully into our human situation of alienation and suffering. God's self-giving incarnate love calls for energetic human response, for entering the situation of suffering of the neighbor to redeem, show mercy, heal and transform, so as to manifest Christ's love amid the world.¹⁰

These words speak of God's love and willingness to suffer on one's behalf, and his intimate knowledge of his people. It is the foundation on which pastors provide pastoral care, listening intentionally and engaging fully with the people that God has entrusted to them. This love and understanding helps the person to trust the pastor with their struggles and sin, as well as their desires and joys.

In his chapter on the importance of self-examination, Oden writes, "What one needs for self-examination is not an elaborate tool bag or a rearrangement of external conditions, but – more costly – a willingness to put oneself to rigorous test, to inquire honestly into one's actual motivations, to monitor accurately one's ongoing emotive processes, to distinguish real from apparent truth."¹¹ Self-examination can be painful, but it is also freeing and makes a pastor a more authentic person who can relate to others openly and honestly. Self-examination also enhances congruency between the pastor's words and actions. If pastors don't practice self-examination, they don't know what to do, say or feel, and they will not grow beyond where they are currently. Pastors ask their parishioners to grow and mature as they provide pastoral care, and as they, the pastors, lead by example. If pastors are unwilling to experience their own pain and struggles, they will be less effective in helping their parishioners experience their own pain and struggles.

This same emphasis of entering into one's pain in order to lead other people to God is found in Henri Nouwen's book, *The Wounded Healer*: "For one man needs another to live, and

10. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 12.

11. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 35.

the deeper he is willing to enter into the painful condition which he and others know, the more likely it is that he can be a leader, leading his people out of the desert into the promised land.”¹²

Entering into one’s pain and experiencing the healing that Christ gives enables the pastor, in turn, to lead others to the same source of healing. Nouwen says, “For the minister is called to recognize the sufferings of his time in his own heart and make that recognition the starting point of his service.”¹³ Entering into one’s own pain allows pastors’ ministry to be authentic and have integrity as they call others to deal with the brokenness and pain in their own lives.

Returning to Oden’s book, the remainder of his chapters elaborate on these images and practices. They are as follows:

- Chapter 2: The Nature of Pastoral Counsel: Its Prevailing Metaphors
- Chapter 3: God’s Own Calling
- Chapter 4: Seasonable Wisdom: The Timing of Good Counsel
- Chapter 5: The Language, Silence and Gesture of Counsel
- Chapter 6: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Admonition, Discipline, and Comfort
- Chapter 7: Moral Counseling and the Nurture of Responsible Freedom
- Chapter 8: Anticipations of Psychotherapy
- Chapter 9: The Psychological Dynamics of the Will.¹⁴

These chapters provide both theological images and practical actions important in providing good biblical pastoral care to parishioners.

Oden describes the pastor as a counselor, physician, guide, liberator, and educator.¹⁵ As a counselor, the pastor’s counsel is to be *good* counsel, that is informed by God through his Word and his Spirit. It is wrought in prayer and practice that seeks to discern the proper counsel to be given.

12. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1979), 63.

13. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, xvi.

14. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, v.

15. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 48.

As a physician, the pastor will need to honestly confront sin, even though in today's culture that is regarded as offensive, and some pastors feel it uncomfortable. Oden says, "The healing of sin occurs by proclaiming the good news of divine forgiveness as radical gift. It is a forgiveness that elicits a responsiveness that searches for the excellent behaviors of prudence and temperance that give moral evidence that divine forgiveness has been taken seriously."¹⁶ Forgiveness is great medicine for those whose hearts are broken over sin, it restores life and relationship.

Pastors act as guide in habit formation, behaviors and nurture. Guides address issues that hinder and help people to live as followers of Christ. Being a guide does not imply that the pastor is the sole indispensable guide. Rather, as a guide the pastor points to Christ, who is the One who guides both the pastor's and the parishioner's lives.

As a liberator, the pastor gives people the knowledge that they have freedom of choice to move forward or to stay imprisoned in their circumstances. Oden says that pastors are "guests of the one who has invited us into the places of struggle and distress."¹⁷ It is God who provides the healing and transformation for growth, and the pastor is present with God and the parishioner in those moments.

Oden says, "The main reasons why we so fiercely resist asking for help are pride, individualism, and the illusion of self-sufficiency."¹⁸ Our culture and society only enlarge this idea, along with the fact that most people would rather run from pain than be willing to admit that they have a need or are hurting. In the midst of self-sufficiency and pride is the fact that it takes time for people to trust the pastor, and one has to be willing to earn that trust over a period

16. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 55.

17. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 70.

18. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 86.

of time. Also convicting is Oden's adamant insistence on integrity as essential to effective pastoral ministry. All in all, Oden's books on pastoral care are a great resource for pastoral care in its many aspects and are resources that one should refer back to often.

The book, *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations* by Zack Eswine, affirms pastoral ministry as being yourself with people, warts and all.¹⁹ The pastor is a person that meets with parishioners, trusting that God is in their midst. No matter the place God calls one, the pastor finds Jesus in that place and points him out in the ordinariness of everyday life. In many ways pastors bring themselves, but then they get out of the way so that God and his glory can be seen and experienced in the moment. It is God and his glory that sustains people in the ordinariness and the crisis moments of life. It is not the pastor who walked with them, nor the mountain top experience, it is God himself that sustains people in life and in death. This book serves as a good reminder that God has been with the congregation long before the pastor came, and God will be with them long after the pastor has left that congregation.²⁰ It is God that allows pastors to walk with people on their journey, and God uses pastors to point to himself, and God uses parishioners to show himself to pastors.

It is also important to point out to people that pastors see God in them. This can be a gift of hope as well as to remind them that they don't need the pastor to see and experience the presence of God. Eswine's thoughts on pointing to God form this question: "How will they be shaped so that they might shape others for Christ?" How pastors answer this question is extremely important not only for the local church, but also for the larger church.

19. Zack Eswine, "Recovering our Humanity" in *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

20. Eswine, "Invisible" in *The Imperfect Pastor*.

David Rohrer, in his book *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry: Preparing People for the Presence of the Lord*, considers pastors as pointers to God. In addition to similar emphases as Eswine's, Rohrer reminds pastors the seeming routineness of one's call is not routine in either their life and ministry, nor in the life of their parishioners.²¹ Whatever the pastor is doing or wherever they are or whomever they are with is a moment that God occupies. In that moment will the pastor see God and help others to see God? Will pastors see God as others point him out to them? Pastors need to be reciprocal in giving and receiving sightings of God in the midst of ministry.

The call of pastoral ministry is about coming into the place that God already occupies and will continue to occupy even when the pastor moves to something else or to some other situation. Pastors need to discern what God is up to in a particular place and time and join him in his kingdom work. Sometimes that looks like new ministry, and other times it means holding back on new ministry because it isn't the right time or the right place. Rohrer assists pastors in an awareness of the mystery of God, by challenging them to be caught up in the bigger picture, God's Kingdom. Part of the mystery of God's Kingdom work is being willing to wait on his outcome. In the moments of ministry, are pastors offering God's gospel of reconciling love in Jesus Christ, or are they merely trying to manage the symptoms of the circumstance? The reality is, pastors can offer some immediate solutions because God is in those as well, but, rather than fixing someone or something, do pastors help people see God's grace in the midst of their brokenness? Pastors need to be attentive to God in order to be attentive to the people that God has called them to serve.

21. David Rohrer, *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry: Preparing People for the Presence of the Lord*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 18.

Eugene Peterson's book, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Ministry*, also reminds one of the necessity of being present with people.²² In ministry today, the pastoral role is to slow down and point out God's presence in the midst of serving and giving. In order to serve and give, people first need to experience the presence and love of God. Serving and giving are a response to God's gift of presence, love and grace. In that, do pastors help people slow down and be present with God in that moment? Peterson also helps pastors reflect upon their style of learning and how that impacts their relationships and ministry. The *way* that people learn can have more influence than *what* they learn. It is important for pastors to know their congregation and teach in ways they can hear and learn.

William Willimon's *Worship as Pastoral Care*, Susan Marie Smith's, *Caring Liturgies: The Pastoral Power of Christian Ritual*, and Gene Fowler's *Caring Through the Funeral: A Pastor's Guide* all emphasize the care that is given in the midst of corporate worship.²³ Willimon is the broadest in scope while Fowler and Smith write about portions of worship or aspects of life, such as baptism, funerals and weddings.

Willimon looks at the role of the pastor or priest. He begins this in the introduction, by saying, "I was their priest, the one who daily stood before them and God, leading them in their own liturgy whereby God could meet us and we could meet God."²⁴ Willimon also expounds upon the fact that "Liturgy is the work of the people."²⁵ In each chapter, Willimon asks great questions that surround worship addressing the issues, such as rationale for worship, our

22. Eugene Peterson, "Being a Spiritual Director" in *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

23. William H. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1979); Susan Marie Smith, *Caring Liturgies: The Pastoral Power of Christian Ritual* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); Gene Fowler, *Caring Through the Funeral: A Pastor's Guide* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004).

24. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care*, 10.

25. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care*, 19.

motivations for change, who is worshipping, and ultimately who is worshipped. When pastors think about changing worship, they need to answer many of these questions, especially their motivations for changing worship. Willimon also suggests that the pastor ask these questions: “In what ways can I as a pastor help my congregation to worship? How can we help the people do what they want to do on Sunday morning but may not remember how to do?... How can we as pastors use the resources in our tradition, in other traditions, in our pastoral care disciplines, and in new forms of worship to strengthen and edify our congregational life?”²⁶ In my tradition, for example, there are several constant components present in every worship service. There is a “Prayer of Adoration” which allows people to come as thankful people to worship God, and in which, through the use of Psalms and by the invocation of God by his attributes, worshippers are helped to know who God is and why they worship Him. Secondly, there is a “Prayer of Confession” where the corporate and personal sins of the people are brought before God to receive forgiveness through the “Assurance of Pardon.” There is also a “Pastoral Prayer” which brings the needs of the people to God. In this prayer, pastors, as priest, bring the people and their concerns to the God who answers prayer and desires to be with them in the communion of prayer.

Pastors also bring God to the people in the midst of all these prayers. According to Willimon, pastoral care and worship are the meeting of God and His people. So he writes,

Christian ministers, if they are doing what they are called to do, will testify that no clear distinction can or should be made between their work as priest and their work as pastor. When the pastor counsels parishioners in his or her study, beside a hospital bed, or around a kitchen table, the pastor is only doing what he or she does in baptism, at the Lord’s Table, in a sermon or a wedding – guiding the people of God in a liturgy whereby they are enabled to meet God and God to meet them. When the pastor breaks the communion bread, raised his hands in a benediction, or leads in prayer, the pastor is only

26. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care*, 19.

doing what he or she does in counseling or other acts of pastoral care – healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling those committed to the pastor’s care.²⁷

He reminds pastors that pastoral care is to bring people into connection with God in worship. There is to be a meeting of the holy, and the sacred, and the everyday as pastors care and as people worship. Additionally, Willimon looks at other worship liturgies: the funeral, the wedding, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.

Susan Marie Smith looks at worship through the lens of ritual, rites and liturgy. She draws the community of faith back to a place where liturgy is meaningful because it can sometimes become rote and meaningless. Liturgies can be used for transitions in life, and places that intersect with suffering. For example, a “Healing and Wholeness Service” provides space for people to bring themselves and their struggles to God in a quiet, contemplative place of worship that includes prayers, Communion, and the laying on of hands by the elders and pastors. There is something about coming forward to be prayed for that marks the occasion of the struggle as being brought into the presence of God. Additionally, this service is a place where the presence of God is celebrated in the midst of Communion. “The Longest Night Service” is another liturgy through which pastoral care is extended. This service allows for sadness and pain to be expressed by people in the midst of Advent and the Christmas season when the world is going full tilt and expects everyone to be happy. The liturgy of this service provides people an ability to slow down in the midst of hurriedness, an ability to acknowledge and have someone else acknowledge their pain, and to hear the hope of Christ that has been given to people in his incarnation and promise of return. This service is specifically slow and contemplative in nature to give people the space to find meaning in the liturgy and to worship God in the midst of loss and pain.

27. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care*, 19.

Gene Fowler looks specifically at the funeral service, including its planning as an opportunity for providing pastoral care. Fowler says, “A Christian funeral is a ceremony connected with burying the body of a dead person...but takes the form of Christian worship.”²⁸ I would add to that by saying it is a witness to the resurrection of Christ, which is the only hope for people as they experience death. The witness to the resurrection brings the sense that life is eternal, and just as Christ rose from the dead, so too do his followers. In this book, Fowler looks at care of the family and friends throughout the process of death, as well as through and past the burial of the deceased. He provides a practical guide to creating a funeral and then caring for the family throughout the process of the funeral.

Alice Matthews’ book, *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, doesn’t speak to the liturgies of worship specifically, but it does look at what preaching and presence looks and feels like to the women in the congregation.²⁹ This book is an important resource for pastoral care because there is a disproportionate number of male preachers to women, and yet there are generally more women in a congregation than men. This resource points out that there are differences between women and men and how they hear and relate to the world. Just so, pastors need to take into consideration the cultural agendas that have been placed on gender in order to provide solid messages that provide care and growth for *both* men and women in their congregations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic so many have lived and are living in isolation, anxiety, fear, and loss. Yet, God created us to be in community to fellowship, serve, care, and to worship together. Often in our churches, at the best of times, community can be fractured by many things, some of which include economic, social strata, gender, race, mental and physical capacity, politics, and much more. These, and now with the added challenges posed by the

28. Fowler, *Caring Through the Funeral*, 88.

29. Alice Matthews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).

pandemic, bring to the forefront the whole nature of a congregation, in all its aspects, as a community. David Horn, in his book *Soulmates: Friendship, Fellowship, and the Making of Christian Community*, helps his readers to see that the preservation of community is not only part of pastoral care but is a command in Scripture. Horn describes friendship as “exclusive, preferential, reciprocal, equal in status, freely chosen, self-benefitting, dynamic, not necessarily spiritually based, direct knowledge of each other, and communication that is secretive.”³⁰ In contrast, fellowship is “nonexclusive, non-preferential, nonreciprocal, without concern for status, divine obligation, self-giving, static, Christ-based, indirect knowing, and communication of transparency.”³¹ With these images in mind Christian community is a commandment of fellowship, of being together no matter the difference, of caring for one another, and including everyone no matter who they are and what their abilities or disabilities.

A great issue in our culture today is that the number of people with special needs has increased exponentially, and many of those affected families find it very difficult to find a Christian community that embraces them with all their struggles and differences. Pastors need to nurture a culture that makes church welcoming and caring for all in the community. Sometimes the pastor might need to teach their parishioners how to be community in a loving and caring way for individuals who experience differences and difficulties. What many people take for granted in community, these, the individuals and families dealing with special needs, struggle to be fully included in the church community. If we are honest, difference scares us, and we need to get over that fear and love one another with a freedom by which we don’t see them as

30. David Horn, *Soulmates Friendship, Fellowship and the Making of Christian Community* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2017), 108.

31. Horn, *Soulmates*, 108.

disqualifying or unworthy of full inclusion. Horn's book helps pastors consider how the congregation they serve opens itself up to one another in community and caring.

Another topic related to pastoral care is pastoral counseling. It is important to know the difference between pastoral care and pastoral counseling. David Benner insists, "At least five forms of soul care should be a part of the life of every Christian church: Christian friendship, pastoral ministry, pastoral care, pastoral counseling, and spiritual direction."³² Benner defines pastoral care as "referring to the total range of help offered by pastors, elders, deacons, and other members of a congregation to those they seek to serve."³³ He goes on to define pastoral counseling as "seeking to help the person reach mature faith, and is a structured way of being with a person who seeks help."³⁴ Pastors who counsel remain in relationship with their parishioners, whereas Christian counselors or secular counselors have only a counseling relationship with the person that they are helping. Pastoral counseling has the following resources for use: "prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and devotional or religious literature."³⁵ Benner shares the advantages of pastoral counseling:

The ability to bring theological reflection to bear on life experiences, the holistic perspective that accompanies the spiritual focus, the availability of religious and congregational resources, the facilitation of trust associated with knowledge of a pastor's values and worldview, the ability to relate in ways that are not restricted to the counseling role, and the ability to provide services regardless of capacity to pay.³⁶

Benner also sees pastoral counseling as being strategic and time limited, intentionally focused on addressing a particular experience with its accompanying feelings and behaviors. There are

32. David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 16.

33. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 19.

34. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 23, 26.

35. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 37.

36. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 41.

“seven characteristics to this type of counseling: it is brief and time-limited, holistic, structured, involves assigned work between sessions, and is church-based, spiritually focused, and explicitly Christian.”³⁷ Further, Benner suggests that pastoral counseling with a parishioner is limited to four to six sessions. Finally, Benner provides a case study with the sessions’ content provided, as well as the stages and tasks of counseling.

All in all, Benner’s book is a very helpful resource because 1. most pastors don’t have time to do long-term counseling, 2. are not trained in long-term counseling, and 3. the dual relationship, offering pastoral care and counseling, can create blurry boundaries in the pastoral relationship. Extremely helpful is his encouragement to 1. make the most of the limited pastoral counseling sessions, 2. be in a directive partnership, and 3. to be aware of one’s limits. Pastors don’t have all the resources or skills to help some people with their psychological issues, especially those who are in need of professional mental health medical treatment. If pastors fail to refer when things are more complex than what they are trained for, they do a disservice to their parishioners. For, in not referring, parishioners may or may not mature or have the freedom from the distresses of mental health issues or traumas that penetrate deep into their soul. Pastors can still be part of the caring and solution, just not the primary source of counseling.³⁸

General studies in counseling can also improve one’s pastoral counseling and they provide perspective on the therapeutic process, the image of people and their needs, as well as dealing with specific issues in life. Philip Culbertson has written the book *Caring for God’s People: Counseling and Christian Wholeness*, that provides overarching processes of different

37. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 47.

38. Kenneth L. Swetland has also written books that contain case studies and are helpful in looking at a counseling model that stretches us in thinking about different issues that pastors might face in counseling sessions. For example, *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church: Case Studies for Pastors and Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005).

types of counseling practices.³⁹ The portion on family systems is helpful as we all live within a family system that drives how we have learned to relate to one another. He also looks at “Narrative Counseling.” Story is an important part of our lives, and we all have a narrative that we live in, both individually and in a larger context. God shares himself with us in the narrative story of Scripture, and story is woven into people’s DNA. He then goes on to give counseling considerations as you counsel people who are dealing with particular issues in life. It is a good overview to broaden a pastor’s knowledge of people and counseling.

Larry Crabb’s works are beneficial and include *Effective Biblical Counseling*, *Understanding People*, and *Men and Women: Enjoying the Difference*.⁴⁰ Irvin Yalom’s books are very helpful, as he counsels from an existential position.⁴¹ The questions he deals with surround people’s existence as well as life and death. Just as Kenneth Swetland helps pastors use case studies, Yalom in his book, *Lying on the Couch*, uses case studies of clients that he counseled. In these, one can observe some of the changes that occur in the midst of long-term counseling. Also, Walter Wangerin has written two books—*Miz Lil and the Chronicles of Grace* and *The Manger is Empty: Stories in Time*—that are anecdotal in nature about his pastoral visitation and care in the congregations where he served.⁴² These books show pastors the importance of care and how God shows up in ways that aren’t always expected, as well as the feelings they might experience in the midst of care.

39. Philip Culbertson, *Caring for God’s People: Counseling and Christian Wholeness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

40. Larry Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling: A Model for Helping Caring Christians Become Capable Counselors* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977); *Understanding People: Deep Longings for Relationship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987); *Men and Women: Enjoying the Difference*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991).

41. Irvin Yalom, *Lying on the Couch* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996).

42. Walter Wangerin, *Miz Lil and the Chronicles of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), and *The Manger is Empty: Stories in Time* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989).

One other dimension of pastoral care that can be part of a pastor's repertoire is Spiritual Direction. There are programs through which pastors and lay people can become certified in spiritual direction. This is a process in which the director and the person seeking direction are attentive to the presence of God in the person's life. The focus is on the presence of God. Benner and Moon have a helpful chart at the end of each of the chapters in their book, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls*, where they look at different denominations and the interfacing of the three options of care—Spiritual Direction, Psychotherapy, and Pastoral Counseling.⁴³ These charts help pastors see the responses of different denominations to these modes of care for their parishioners based on their theology. The charts, in addition to comparing these three modes of care, look at the presenting problem, goals, procedures (activities), and resources that were available to them.

The book *Spiritual Direction* by Henri Nouwen has been edited posthumously and takes the principles and language of Nouwen and ties them together in a congruent book about spiritual direction.⁴⁴ Nouwen's definition of spiritual direction is, "a relationship initiated by a spiritual seeker who finds a mature person of faith willing to pray and respond with wisdom and understanding to his or her questions about how to live spiritually in a world of ambiguity and distraction."⁴⁵ Spiritual direction is the intentional seeking of God in the person's life. This is a helpful practice for people to be able to see the work of God in their life, be open to wonder about their struggles and joys, see how they perceive God, and how they need to respond and live for God. In another sense part of pastoral care isn't simply spiritual direction, but pastors

43. Gary Moon and David Benner, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004).

44. Henri J. M. Nouwen, Michael J. Christensen, and Rebecca J. Laird, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* (New York: Harper One, 2006).

45. Nouwen, Christensen, and Laird, *Spiritual Direction*, ix.

are to notice where God is in the midst of pastoral care and point to God in the moment.

Spiritual direction is a formalized relationship where one meets with a director who has the ability to help discern the work of God in the circumstance of one's life.

Another resource in pastoral care, to help connect people with God, is the use of novels. Reading novels or fiction can help people see themselves or God in a way that is heard and digested without being technical or highly theological in nature. This is a tool that can be very helpful for people to identify with and think about their lives in a self-reflective way, as story is embedded within our souls.

Classic books of the great writers can also be utilized—books by authors such as Dickens, Fitzgerald, Zola, Steinbeck, Sartre, Camus, Hemingway and others. Other authors that could be added to this list are Toni Morrison, Chaim Potok, Madeleine L'Engle, C. S. Lewis, Chesterton, and George MacDonald. Pat Conroy's books, for example, can be recommended or those who might have significant family dynamics that are painful and traumatic. George MacDonald, a Scottish pastor who lived in the 1800s, has written about human relationships, God, and theology all rolled into easy-to-read books that are helpful for people in reflecting upon their own lives and circumstances. The Mitford Series by Jan Karon is particularly helpful for pastors to use in examining themselves in their pastoral role and relationships.⁴⁶ Janette Oke, in her series of books, helps people see God at work in the midst of life and the struggle of relationships and loss.⁴⁷ Christian autobiographies are often beneficial as well. These books have an authenticity and honesty about how hard life can be and where they have seen God at

46. The Mitford Years is a series of fourteen novels by American writer Jan Karon, set in the fictional town of Mitford, North Carolina. The novels are Christian-themed, and center on the life of the rector, Father Tim.

47. A complete list of Janette Oke's *Love Comes Softly Series* can be found at <https://www.goodreads.com/series/57897-love-comes-softly>.

work, but they don't preach to people about how they should live. Some of these authors include Brennan Manning, Anne Lamott, and Barbara Brown Taylor.

Shared Ministry

Shared ministry is a very important aspect of pastoral care on which there are several valuable resources. One that is well known is Stephen Ministry, a well-organized, successful international ministry, devoted to training lay people to care in a Christian manner. Stephen Ministry or other lay caring ministries empower parishioners to care for others with competence and comfort. They have a plethora of training and teaching materials that are taught in a fifty-hour course with readings from the two volume Training Manuals and *Speaking the Truth in Love, Christian Care Giving: A Way of Life*, and *When and How to Use Mental Health Resources: A Guide for Stephen Ministers, Stephen Leaders, and Church Staff*.⁴⁸ Dr. Kenneth Haugk, executive director of Stephen Ministry has written most of these accessible, coherent, and faithful books.

Once the Stephen Ministers are trained, they are commissioned in front of the congregation, which helps the congregation understand this confidential ministry. It is well worth the one-time covenant fee paid to Stephen Ministry as the congregations receive the support and materials needed for this ministry. Stephen Ministry offers week-long training for the leaders of this ministry, teaching them the skills of referral, supervision, continuing education and training, and marketing. In smaller congregations one or two leaders can handle these roles. In larger congregations, each position is likely to have a leader. This ministry also considers the long-

48. For information on these resources, see Stephen Ministries, "Resources Stephen Ministers Use in Training," accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/970>.

term needs of training and care through continuing education and supervision. They recommend continuing education to be once a month and twice a month for supervision.

Stephen Ministry also offers books as resources to use with their care-receivers or others called *Journeying through Grief*, a series of four little booklets that contain short stories or essays that provide insight and assistance in the grief process.⁴⁹ They are given to the person who has experienced loss at the one-month, three-month, six-month, and one-year anniversary of the death of their loved one. These books are meant to be used in that period of time as grief sometimes causes one to struggle with the ability to focus, therefore they are short in nature and helpful so that the person feels normal in their grieving processes.

Another helpful book from Stephen Ministries is *Cancer, Now What?*⁵⁰ This book is a great resource for those who have been diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones. It helps them to navigate the medical field, deal with all their relationships, and care for themselves in the midst of sometimes difficult decision-making. Dr. Haugk collaborated with a research team of twelve who had personal or professional connection to cancer, which produced a good reference for lay people to understand and help them in a difficult time of life when they might not be thinking clearly.

Additional resources for Stephen Ministers include the following devotionals that offer spiritual input: A. J. Russell's *God Calling*, Gretchen Person's *Psalms for Healing: Praying with Those in Need*, Eugene Peterson's *Every Step and Arrival: A 90-Day Devotional for Exploring God's Word*, and Joyce Rupp's *Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment*.⁵¹

49. See "Journeying through Grief: A Simple, Powerful Way to Care for People Who Are Grieving," Stephen Ministries, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.stephenministries.org/griefresources/default.cfm/774>.

50. Kenneth Haugk, *Cancer, Now What?: Taking Action, Finding Hope, and Navigating the Journey Ahead*. (St. Louis: Stephen Ministries, 2017).

If a congregation doesn't have the finances or ability to use Stephen Ministry, there is a training manual that is helpful in how to start a lay care ministry in your congregation. Karen Lampe's *The Caring Congregation: Training Manual and Resource Guide* can help a congregation either begin or expand their caring ministries.⁵² This book offers some of the same categories that Stephen Ministry teaches to their parishioners and they include a toolbox for care, which includes prayer, Scripture reading, silence, listening skills, and role playing situations. Further, this manual gives guidelines on beginning caring ministries and resources to evaluate short-term progress as well as the long-term results of caring ministries.

Other resources for shared ministry specific to congregation and members' needs are *DivorceCare*, a lay led video ministry for people who are divorcing or are divorced, a children's version of *DivorceCare*, as well as a video series on grief, entitled *GriefShare*.⁵³

Self-Care

Self-care and self-knowledge are also vital to effective pastoral care ministry. There are many aspects of self-care that are important to continuing in ministry in an authentic, godly, and healthy way, to prevent burn out or failure in ministry. There is a great deal of literature in the different areas of self-care. John Ortberg's book, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* talks about what the soul is, what the soul needs, and what is a restored soul.⁵⁴ This

51. A. J. Russell, *God Calling* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barboud, 1998); Gretchen Person, *Psalms for Healing: Praying with Those in Need* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001); Eugene Peterson, *Every Step and Arrival: A 90-Day Devotional for Exploring God's Word* (New York: Waterbrook, 2018); Joyce Rupp, *Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2007).

52. Karen Lampe, *The Caring Congregation: Training Manual and Resource Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014).

53. DivorceCare and GriefShare are ministries of Church Initiative. For more information see <https://www.churchinitiative.org/>, <https://www.divorcecare.org/>, and <https://www.griefshare.org/>.

book helps pastors see the importance of their own soul in ministry. Another book that is very helpful in determining what one needs to improve their self-care is Wilson and Hoffman's book/workbook, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A Shepherd Care Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers*.⁵⁵ This book can be used daily to look at one's practices of self-care and where one might be headed if one doesn't do something to claim their time away from ministry. No matter where pastors serve in ministry, life and crisis aren't confined to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In the midst of days off, vacations, and "off hours", inevitably some pastoral need or situation will highjack this time. If pastors are not careful about taking care of themselves, they can burn out and become much less effective for the kingdom of God.

Brad Hoffman is a pastor and Michael Todd Wilson is a Christ-centered licensed professional counselor, both serve people in ministry who are struggling, and their book opens with a staggering discovery from their ministry:

One day, the two of us sat down to reminisce about those we'd worked with who were removed from ministry, grouping them by reason for termination. We discovered seven areas of consistent failure: (1) lack of genuine intimacy in relationships with God, spouse and other; (2) a distorted sense of calling; (3) inadequate stress-management skills; (4) lack of appropriate boundaries; (5) failure to prioritize re-creation; (6) insufficient people skills; and (7) underdeveloped leadership skills.⁵⁶

Many pastors fall into at least one of these categories and their ministries suffer because they don't care for themselves in a healthy way. This workbook is divided into the seven areas listed above and provides opportunities for one to answer questions about motives, habits, and desires. Additionally, it provides definitions of these areas that have a biblical underpinning.

54. John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

55. Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A Shepherd Care Guide for Pastors* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007).

56. Wilson and Hoffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 9.

Chuck DeGroat wrote the book *Wholeheartedness: Busyness, Exhaustion, and Healing the Divided Self* which considers the tension in ministry of serving and being exhausted because of the unending task ahead for pastors.⁵⁷ He invites pastors to be drawn in by the love of Christ and allow it to overwhelm and bring wholeness to life in order to walk with others who are exhausted and broken. DeGroat explains the different things in life that cause exhaustion, and the places pastors need to move in their relationship with God. Part one looks at diagnosing one's lack of wholeness, and part two deals with awakening to wholeness. In the busyness of life and ministry pastors can lose connection to their hearts and the present moment. He talks about pastors needing to meet and feast on their long-lost life. Pastors need to pay attention to their deepest desires and abandon their self-improvement projects, and embrace brokenness, as an integral part of themselves. In doing this, pastors no longer possess but are possessed by God to do the work of purifying and making them wholehearted. Part three of this book helps pastors know that they can experience wholeness by reflection and rediscovering who they are in God. The final three chapters have exercises that help pastors to slow down and become aware of who they are and their stories.

Another book that is helpful in looking at oneself and one's spiritual life is Peter Scazzero's book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*.⁵⁸ This book examines and diagnoses the problem of one's spiritual life, and then considers the way to move forward and develop a rule of life. A similar book is Henri Nouwen's *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*.⁵⁹ This book provides one an opportunity to see where they have been wounded and

57. Chuck DeGroat, *Wholeheartedness: Busyness, Exhaustion, and Healing the Divided Self* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016).

58. Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

59. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*.

healed by Christ. Pastors have greater capacity to allow others to journey on the healing path to wholeness in Christ when they know their own journey of pain and healing. No one in life is without wounds, and in order to relate and live effectively it is important to know those wounds and allow God to heal them. The scars may be permanent, but the wholeness of God will shine through. It is those scars that show there has been healing by Jesus, who was, after all, scarred for us.

Another aspect of self-care is sabbath. Pastors don't have sabbath as others experience sabbath on Sundays. Sundays, for pastors, are in worship, but they are also full of work and liturgy and prayer and giving to others. Where is it that pastors are re-created in life? It is important for pastors to find time to be re-created, to rest and renew, and to play and enjoy life. Sabbath is both a resting and a playing. It is alone time and time with family and friends. Mark Buchanan's book on Sabbath, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*, shows that sabbath is not a group of restrictive rules, but a place of rest and renewal that allows for re-creation and recreation of one's soul, which brings forth new life and energy.⁶⁰

There are several well-known authors who write about different spiritual disciplines that pastors need to practice. Foster's most well-known book is *Celebration of Discipline*, and another book of his that is helpful is *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*.⁶¹ Some of Dallas Willard's books include *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, and *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*.⁶² Marjorie Thompson is

60. Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006).

61. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper Publishers, 1978); *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

another author who helps pastors cultivate their spiritual lives, especially in her book *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*.⁶³ Ruth Haley Barton, in her book *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Formation*, outlines many spiritual disciplines.⁶⁴ Her chapter on *Lectio Divina* is particularly helpful. Being a part of a *Lectio Divina* group can be life-giving for a pastor's spiritual life.

Self-care also considers one's body, one's home and the things that keep one well. A journal can help one consider all the areas of their life, not just their spiritual life. Melissa Michaels has written *Dwelling Well: A Monthly Journal to Nourish Your Home, Body & Soul*, and it provides one with opportunities to make goals for the year, as well as a month at a time.⁶⁵ It provides some journaling prompts to consider in the areas of physical and emotional wellbeing, one's home, one's relationships, acts of kindness, and one's spiritual health. Journaling can be helpful to see where God has been active and leading one, as well as to where one has gained insight into particular issues of life. One final thought on self-care is that one needs always to be working at it. That seems strange to say, but it is very easy for life to get in the way of caring for ourselves.

Most of the books on pastoral care and theology of pastoral care provide sections on self-care. The amount of writing on self-care reflects its importance for the provision of good pastoral care and the health of the pastor. To reiterate, pastors must be connected to God in order

62. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper Publishers, 1997); *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: Harper Publishers, 1988).

63. Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

64. Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006).

65. Melissa Michaels, *Dwelling Well: A Monthly Journal to Nourish Your Home, Body, & Soul* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2020).

to point other people to God in a way that has the potential to bring about hope and health in their lives. If pastors are not connected to God intimately, as well as to others, they will most likely struggle to be connected to their parishioners in a healthy way. They will not connect with authenticity, or they may be overly needy and lose their boundaries, which can lead to inappropriate relationships.

To complement this literature review, an annotated, thematic bibliography has been attached as Appendix D. This bibliography will give some resources regarding specific issues. This bibliography is certainly not exhaustive or comprehensive but will give one a beginning place to read on issues pastors might encounter in life and ministry.

Mentoring and Continuing Education

This portion of the literature review looks forward to the next steps of providing a one-year residency in pastoral care or continuing education courses. Beverly Hislop's Doctor of Ministry thesis-project provides thoughts on creating educational programs.⁶⁶ Beverly Hislop is the Executive Director of the Women's Center and the Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care to Women at Western Seminary. In her thesis-project she provides both the method of development as well as the finished curriculum for women who are experiencing pain. She writes,

The goals of this course are to 1) increase awareness, compassion, and understanding of the emotional pain in women's lives, focusing on eight particular issues that cause emotional pain; 2) clarify the understanding of the theological meaning of suffering and identify the church's mandate to minister to the weak and suffering; and 3) to increase specific helping needs.⁶⁷

66. Beverly Hislop, "Women in Pain: The Need to Train Leaders in Effective Pastoral Care" (Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 2005).

67. Hislop, "Women in Pain," 73.

Additionally, Professor Hislop provides outlines, course objectives, reading lists, written assignments, and suggestions for the use of guest instructors. Her class outlines have great questions for discussion which help the students to engage actively in the learning process. Her thesis-project has at least six resources on teaching and education—both secular and theological—as a beginning reading list.

Hislop also includes guest instructors in her course. “The profile of the guest instructor would ideally include one who has personally experienced the issue, understands the issue, is able to teach on the issue and ideally has a ministry or is a resource for students to refer in the future.”⁶⁸ It is important in adult learning to have people who understand the issue that they are teaching in order to better relate to their learners. Hislop sometimes has the guest instructor bring someone who has personal experience, since it might be difficult to have all the guest instructors have personal experience with all the issues. Real life experience is a great teacher, particularly when there has been significant healing from a specific issue.

Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter affirms that good pastoral care, utilizing the images of shepherd, priest, and counselor, nurtures the parishioners “along the way” and is offered throughout all aspects of ministry, including worship. The pastor both represents the presence of Christ and joins in his work. Pastors are like John the Baptist, in that they point to the Savior, to God. Pastoral care requires listening, understanding, love, comfort, peace, forgiveness, honesty, and authenticity. The pastor needs to know themselves, as they bring themselves to the pastoral care encounter. This is learned through self-examination and reflection. Pastoral care is also a

68. Hislop, “Women in Pain,” 81.

shared ministry, engaged in by other members of the congregation as well as the pastor. Most importantly, because of the demands of ministry, pastors need to cultivate and renew their relationship with God through self-care and sabbath-keeping. This is necessary to provide good pastoral care. Finally, pastoral care requires continued education and mentoring to improve one's skills.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction – In Memoriam

As I considered this topic for my thesis-project, and in designing my research process, I knew that there were two people whom I desired to interview. Both of these pastors were grace-filled men of faith who provided excellent pastoral care to their parishioners and students. Unfortunately, they both died to this life before I began my interviewing process. Dr. Kenneth Swetland, a professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, was a man who cared deeply and biblically for his students and pastors in the community where he lived. He wrote helpful books on caring and dealing with people's lives who had experienced difficulty from their own decisions or someone else's decisions.

Dr. William Holmes was a pastor who embodied pastoral care. This man of God served a small congregation faithfully in rural South Carolina, rather than taking the large church that desired him. He did this in order to be a part of the community and provide pastoral care and leadership to a community that he dearly loved and where he became beloved. He retired early, due to Parkinson's disease. He and his wife moved to Columbia, SC and worshipped at the church where I serve. Even with his debilitating disease he was a man filled with grace and care for others. He sat in the back of the sanctuary in his wheelchair and always had a big smile and a word of encouragement for each of the pastors as we either entered or exited the sanctuary for worship. His only desire in the last days of his life was to be back in his ministerial robe teaching and caring for God's people. I would say, that with or without the robe, Dr. Holmes was a pastor to whomever he encountered. It was my privilege to care for him and his wife during his illness. I pray that my research, as well as my observations of these men inform my

pastoral care that points people to God, who loves them, forgives them, provides for them, and cares for them in all situations. Michael Card has a song, “For F.F.B.”, that expresses this very thought about his grandfather who was a pastor, a man who shepherded his flock well:

Just a simple preacher from the Carolina hills
Born in just the perfect place and time
A gentle, loving mountain man
With warm and sparkling eyes
And a face that wrinkled from a constant smile.

From you I learned the kind of faith
That looks up to the mountains
Oh, Grandad, I wish you could be here
To tell me what to do
'Cause I first saw the light of Christ through you. (chorus)

It must have been a special love that filled your shepherd's heart
That made you care so deeply for your flock
'Cause I hear tell on winter days
You'd give your coat away
Simply 'cause you thought they'd need it more.¹

I truly believe that the heart of the pastor is for the other, and in that they give the love of Christ to their flock, as well as the people that they encounter along the way.

Project Research

Three areas of research were considered for this thesis-project. Namely, the requirements of seminaries for Master of Divinity students, surveys of perceived preparedness for ministry by graduating seminarians who will be entering pastoral ministry, and semi-structured interviews with long tenured pastors who have provided pastoral care in a variety of settings. My hope is that I will be able to identify the gap that is present in pastoral ministry from newly ordained pastors to long tenured pastors. With the finding of this gap, I can then move forward in creating

1. Michael Card, “For F.F.B.”, track 12 on *Poema*, The Sparrow Corporation, 1994.

continuing education opportunities for pastors that are relevant, and/or post-seminary for newly mentorship experience.

Seminary Requirements for Master of Divinity Students

In looking at the requirements for a Master of Divinity Degree I looked at eleven prominent seminaries in the United States. The seminaries were chosen because sound, astute, biblical pastors attend them. These seminaries were Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Nondenominational, Presbyterian Church USA, and Reformed. The education requirements were grouped into categories that have connections to the coursework. A chart was created from the seminaries selected and the requirements for a Master of Divinity degree. This chart is in Appendix A of this thesis-project.

The requirement for biblical and preaching courses ranged from four to sixteen. These two categories were grouped together as they deal with the Scriptural text and included language, exegesis, and preaching courses. Theology and ethics course requirements ranged from three to six. These courses consider doctrine and response to doctrine that inform pastoral ministry in all of its aspects. The next section grouped together was mission, church history, and leadership coursework. Church history influences mission and leadership of the church, and missiology is part of church history so therefore, they were grouped together. Granted, leadership influences pastoral care, but is not a direct correlation to the care that is given to parishioners. Pastoral care and education courses were grouped together because I regard pastoral care as part of nurture and faith development in the life of individuals and congregations. These courses ranged from one to four required courses. Electives filled out the coursework requirements and ranged from three to ten courses.

The mentored ministry or internship requirements ranged from zero to six units. Only one seminary required CPE, although the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) denomination requires CPE in its standards for ordination. The majority of mentored ministry units did not have a requirement as to what was included for content. Much of the experience for mentored ministry is determined by the student and the faculty or pastoral advisor. This leaves the ministry experiences open to great variety, but also limits what some seminary students may experience. For instance, if the student is interested in preaching, teaching, and worship leadership they might not have any pastoral care opportunities in their mentored ministry or internship. Additionally, if they are at a small church, they may not have the opportunity to assist with funerals or weddings. Yet, both of these events are times of pastoral care and counseling and are most helpful to walk through with an experienced pastor.

On the basis of these results, the obvious emphasis is on Scripture and preaching. This is certainly necessary, and one can learn from Scripture what pastoral care can look like, particularly from the books of Job, the Psalms, the gospels, and even in the historical books of the Old Testament. Scripture and theology courses provide the foundation of who God is, and how much he loves people and cares and provides for them. The gospels certainly show how Jesus ministered to people. There is not direct teaching about pastoral care in these courses, unless it is the proclivity of the professor to include the theme of pastoral care in his/her course.

One can also glean from mission and history and leadership skills to assist in pastoral care and education, but again, for the most part, care isn't the forefront of the teaching material for these courses. Theology and ethics are the courses that can influence pastoral care in the strongest way apart from direct pastoral care courses, as they consider who God is, and how his

followers are to respond to their world. But once again, these courses don't intentionally teach pastoral care to the students taking these courses.

The conclusion from this information is that the least amount of coursework and requirements for seminary graduation are in the areas of pastoral care and education. Considering that pastoral care ranges from 25% to 75% of pastoral ministry, this portion of education is lacking in the completion of a Master of Divinity degree, as it is only two to four percent of the coursework, not including mentored ministry. But, once again, mentored ministry varies depending on the emphasis of the student and supervisor of the mentored ministry.

Perceived Preparedness for Pastoral Care Ministry Surveys

The surveys for "Preparedness for Pastoral Ministry" were written to answer the question, "Do graduating seminarians have the capacity to provide good pastoral care?" Unfortunately, I had a very poor response to my surveys, so the data obtained is more than likely not significant. There are several factors that influenced this result. First and foremost, near the end of a seminary semester or a degree program, students are tired and just want to be done, so taking time for surveys isn't on the top of their list. In conversations with a seminary professor, he shared that many seminaries even have difficulty getting students to fill out the class evaluations that are required for accreditation. Secondly, with the COVID-19 pandemic in its fourth month at the time of the survey, people were struggling with the use of technology as classes had been virtual and screen time tiring. This fatigue might have influenced their willingness to participate in another online opportunity. Finally, the students who answered the surveys had an interest in pastoral care, and that could have been a motivation to answer the survey questions.

The survey was sent to four seminaries, and only three granted permission to post the survey within their communities of graduating students. Out of those three seminaries, there was a potential of 400 responses, but only 7 were received, which is 1.6% of the possible responses. Therefore, the data is not statistically relevant. The survey is attached to this thesis-project as Appendix B.

There were two age groups that responded to the survey, those in the age range of 25 to 35 and those in the age range of 36 to 45. The majority of the responses came from the younger group, 25 to 35 years of age. There were five students who responded, or 71.43%. Of those in the 36- to 45-year-old group there were 2 students who responded, or 28.5%. The male to female ratio was the same. Five students were male and two were female. The percentage then is the same as age, 71.43% being male and 28.57% being female.

The participants were from PCUSA, United Church of Christ (UCC) and Baptist denominations. There were two participants that responded “not applicable” to the question of denominational ordination. All of the participants graduated in May of 2020.

Pre-seminary employment included four in ministry, one in marketing, one in the military, and one in education. The two oldest seminarians had both worked fifteen years in their field which was education for one and pastoral ministry for the other. The answers to the question regarding the length of employment prior to seminary ranged from 2 years to 15 years. The education prior to seminary seemed to have no impact to perceived preparedness for pastoral ministry. An interesting observation is that the female who was in the 25 to 35 age range had worked part-time as co-leader of youth and part-time lifeguard, and although she omitted the length of time employed, she felt very prepared for pastoral care ministry. On the other hand, the pastor with fifteen years of experience felt adequately prepared, and the educator with fifteen

years of experience only felt somewhat prepared. From this, I wonder if life experience impacts one's perception of their level of preparedness for pastoral care ministry.

The seminaries' requirements for pastoral care courses varied as well. Four participants' seminaries required one course in pastoral care, one participant's seminary required two courses, one participant's seminary required three courses, and one participant's seminary required four or more courses. It is interesting to note that out of three seminaries surveyed there were four different answers. Significantly, though, the majority, four out of seven, were only required to take one pastoral care course for their seminary degree. Clearly, the number required agrees with the findings from polling the seminaries' requirements.

All seven participants responded to the question of how many pastoral care courses they took. Three of them, or 43.86% of those surveyed took four or more courses, two seminarians, or 28.57% of those surveyed, took only the required one course on pastoral ministry. Four students took more pastoral care courses than were required and three students took the required amount of pastoral care courses. Below is a table that shows the breakdown of the number of pastoral courses required and the number of pastoral care courses actually taken. This table shows that the majority of students took more pastoral care courses than was required by the seminary.

Table 1. Pastoral Care Courses Required vs. Taken

Required Pastoral Care Courses	Pastoral Care Courses Taken
1	1
1	1
1	2
1	3
2	Over 4
3	Over 4
Over 4	Over 4

There were a variety of answers regarding the focus of the students' post-seminary ministry. Two will serve in youth and young adult ministry, one in teaching and discipleship, two in preaching and care, and two in pastoral care or chaplaincy. The perceived amount of pastoral care ministry ranged from 21% to over 50%. Only one participant felt that the amount of pastoral care would be 21% to 30% of their ministry time, as their ministry will be youth and young adults. Two participants felt that their pastoral care would be 31% to 40% of their time, another two felt that their pastoral care would be 41% to 50% of their time, and the final two participants felt that their pastoral care would be over 50% of their time.

In considering mentored ministry, five of the participants were required to take mentored ministry units and two were not required to take any mentored ministry units for either their seminary or for ordination. Out of the seven, five felt a need for continuing education in pastoral care post-seminary and two felt the need for mentorship in pastoral care post-seminary. All seven felt a need for more education or training in specific issues. These issues were varied and included youth with special learning styles, caring for the opposite sex, marriage and family, pastoral counseling, and a variety of life issues. Two participants that felt mentorship post seminary was needed. One took only one course in pastoral care, had no mentored ministry or CPE, and only felt somewhat prepared to provide pastoral care. The second participant, who took two courses in pastoral care and had taken a mentored ministry or CPE unit, felt adequately prepared and has served as a pastor for 15 years.

Semi-structured Interviews with Long Tenured Pastors

Semi-structured interviews from ten pastors who excel in pastoral care were completed. The goals of the interviews were to determine how long tenured pastors defined pastoral care,

how they have grown in pastoral care ministry, and how they gained that skill or knowledge.

The hope was to find what filled the gap in pastoral care from graduation to long tenured pastoring. A sampling of questions and answers is provided below. The complete list of interview questions is attached as Appendix C.

Question 1: How many years of ministry?

Overall, these ten pastors represent 339 years of ministry, ranging from the minimum of 25 years to the maximum of 46 years of ministry. Seventy percent of the pastors served 30 years or more. They represent a variety of denominations which include Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Evangelical Free, with the majority being Presbyterian. The survey included two women and eight men.

Question 2: What is your seminary degree?

Question 3: Do you have a post-seminary degree and what is it?

All the pastors have a Master of Divinity degree except one who attended a Bible College. Four different seminaries were represented in the pastors with Master of Divinity Degrees. Seven of the pastors have advanced degrees, with the majority (six) being Doctor of Ministry degrees, and one has a Th.D. in Sociology. Four different seminaries and one university were represented in the pastors with advanced degrees.

Two pastors completed additional CPE or internships after their Master of Divinity degree. One who had an interest in pastoral care did a one-year CPE course. The other pastor's denomination felt that a one-year internship with a retiring pastor would benefit him and make him more prepared for ministry. Both of these pastors expressed great appreciation for these opportunities and felt that they enhanced their ministry, particularly in regard to pastoral care.

For the pastor who completed an extra year of CPE, a variety of situations and circumstances were provided that raised ministry opportunities to reflect upon God. CPE challenged her to reflect upon God and life, both individually and with a group. The group setting allowed her to receive feedback on the care provided, and the feelings that were associated with the care. The one-year internship was invaluable for the pastor who had this opportunity. He felt that his routine of ministry was formed during this time. The rhythm of study, visitation, programming, and administrative duties was established that has served him well throughout his 35 years of ministry. Additionally, one pastor who grew up as a preacher's kid watched his father have a structured time of study, office hours, and visitation.

Question 4: What percentage of your ministry is pastoral care?

The amount of time providing pastoral care averaged 40% and ranged from 25% to 75%. These pastors either implicitly or explicitly said that these percentages were involved in intentional pastoral care. Yet, they also stated that there is significant care that happens "along the way," such as passing in the halls at church, seeing people out in the community, having conversations about other aspects of ministry, or in the midst of committee meetings. This question was difficult for many of the pastors to answer because pastoral care occurs in all aspects of ministry and includes teaching bible study or preaching sermons that are relevant to people's need to know Christ in the midst of their current circumstances. The two pastors whose main role is pastoral care estimated that pastoral care occupied 50% to 75% of their ministry.

Question 5: Do you have a working definition of pastoral care, and what is that definition?

Most of the responses expressed an understanding of pastoral care as helping those in crisis to be aware of Christ's presence by "bringing Christ to a person" or "bringing Christ out of a person." These pastors defined pastoral care as demonstrating the love of Christ, the grace of Christ, the kindness and compassion of Christ, and the empathy of Christ being extended. These are all positive and encouraging images. Only one pastor's answer included "telling it like it is" or "not sugar-coating things," suggesting grace and love are not always easy or uplifting or even affirming conversations. Love and grace both confront sin and/or poor decisions, but such confrontation is done with care, and by being attentive to the timing of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom is needed as one provides pastoral care for people, particularly in the midst of suffering and pain. A strong idea that emerged from these definitions of care is that it is a journey, whereby the pastor has the opportunity to walk alongside people in whatever circumstance they find themselves. Further, it means being present in the moment both with God and the person who needs care. These pastors feel there is something important about making room for God to be present in the words, actions and silences with people who need care.

In analyzing the pastors' definitions of pastoral care, two thoughts emerged. The first is what pastoral care "is" and the other is "what one does" in pastoral care. One has the attributes of Christ and his ministry, and the other shows what actions Christ took with the people whom he encountered. The attributes are love, grace, mercy, caring, compassion, kindness, empathy, sympathy, and encouragement, as well as confrontation and truthfulness. The actions are prayer, bringing the Word of God, relying on the Holy Spirit, seeking wisdom, taking care of physical needs that get in the way of seeing God or helping someone to see who God is in their situation, holding a hand, and training members of the congregation to provide care to one another.

Pastoral care is not one or the other but is both the attributes of Christ being brought to the person and the actions that are done by the pastor.

Many of the pastors in defining care recognized that knowing oneself and bringing oneself who we are to the people needing care is important. It is important to know what one has experienced in one's life and how that impacts the people that one is with while caring. Pastors need to be careful not to put their own experiences into the parishioners' circumstances. On the other hand, when pastors have experienced similar circumstances, they have a wisdom to impart, but need to remember that they are not central to the encounter.

Furthermore, the pastors' own experiences can sometimes get in the way of their pastoral care. The pastors' experiences can be similar to the parishioner, but there may also be emotions of the pastor about the experience that may hinder or harm the pastoral relationship. The emotions that can particularly get in the way are the pastor's unresolved anger and unforgiveness lingering from a prior experience that may now be displaced upon the parishioner and the parishioner's situation. Another emotional response that can be difficult is suffering. One pastor felt that spiritual care is needed for those who are suffering, yet suffering can be overwhelming, and pastors need to be able to self-differentiate from the parishioner's suffering. It is important for pastors to deal with their own emotions so that those emotions are not imputed upon and interfere with the pastoral care relationship. Nevertheless, the pastor also needs to have available to them some objective process or persons to assist them in dealing with their emotions that may arise during the caring relationship.

Question 6: What do you hope to have happen in the midst of pastoral care?

This question provided some common threads, and there was some overlap with the definition of pastoral care. One of the most common themes is being present and that God is present with the person in some tangible way. Some of the answers included,

1. Experiencing the compassion of Christ
2. Being heard, being reminded of the presence of Christ
3. Experiencing the presence of Christ, remembering what they already knew from previous experience about God
4. That God's love would be experienced, to see Christ
5. Knowing that someone cares about them
6. Finding a new meaningful realization about themselves
7. To know God's promise of hope for healing and wholeness regardless of what is broken.

In all the myriad of ways that this was said, it comes down to experiencing Christ in a way that brings about hope even if the situation doesn't change. In experiencing Christ, these pastors utilized the Word of God, prayer, conversations with parishioners, teaching, and worship.

These ten pastors expressed that pastoral care, experiencing God's presence, and spiritual formation depends upon the Holy Spirit. They determined this happened in a variety of ways—just sitting with someone, gaining a profound insight into the situation, and empathic listening. Their desire was that people recognize they are not alone in whatever they are going through, but that God is with them, even before the pastor arrives, and God continues to be with them even after the pastor leaves. So, no matter if pastors are with people or they are alone, God is with them, and pastors come alongside what God is already doing in the parishioners' lives.

Two of the pastors articulated the fact that they desired that something meaningful for the present and the future would come of the encounter. One said, "there would be a realization of self in a meaningful way," and the other said it this way, "that new resources would provide positive change for the individual and their family." Pastors certainly can't control this, but there

is something important in providing people with something or someone to depend upon in their distress.

Question 7: What do you know about pastoral care now that you wish you knew earlier in ministry?

The answers to this question fell into three categories:

1. Pastoral care is the most important part of ministry that a pastor can do.
2. A pastor cannot and should not fix people.
3. The pastor brings themselves and the presence of God to the process.

Five of the pastors, or 50% of the interviewees, related that pastoral care is one of the most important aspects of ministry, and it is where spiritual formation and change in people's lives occur. It is about the relationships that are formed in those caring moments that have an impact for and by God and are the marks of ministry when all is said and done. Four of these five pastors all have been head-of-staff pastors, and the fifth one was currently serving as an interim senior pastor, but most of his ministry was as senior pastor. The pastor who said "Pastoral care is the most important aspect of ministry" has a debilitating neurological disease that forced him to retire early and at his retirement people in his congregation commented on his care rather than any programs or sermons that were part of his ministry for ten years.

The second theme, "Pastors cannot and should not fix people," was the response of three of the pastors, or 30%. One answered, "I am not to make people better; that is Jesus' job. God was in the room ahead of me, and I am to love them, pray for them, and watch Jesus work." The second said, "Pastoral care is about watching Jesus work as we get to tag along on the visit." The final pastor said, "I can't sort everyone out. There are just some things I can't fix. I am to be a friend with people, just love them where they are and not force them to be spiritual." These attitudes give God the space to work in peoples' lives where human reason and words don't

adequately answer the suffering or address the issues. Pastors need to learn this lesson early and if pastors are honest with themselves, they don't like to be fixed either.

The third theme, that of being present and noticing God's presence, was mentioned in a variety of ways by five, or 50% of the pastors. Being present with people in the midst of struggles and suffering means that they aren't alone, and if pastors are authentic in who they are, the people receiving care can also be authentic in who they are and not feel like they have to be or act a certain way in the circumstance. A secondary theme emerged in the answers to this question, namely that the relationship is more important than getting it right or applying a certain paradigm or technique of pastoral care. The pastors were convinced that the right words or particular techniques aren't what break through for people, it is about being with them, allowing them to process and to feel and think without manipulation or expectation of doing something in a certain way. The sense of being present with people invites the space for God to be at work in the process. Pastors are there to give God space and voice in parishioners' lives. One of the pastors put it this way, "I have to have flexibility in the day for God moments. They aren't interruptions, they are God moments. We slow down, listen and believe that the Holy Spirit is at work." Another pastor said quite profoundly, "Quietness is better than chatter."

The conviction of the Holy Spirit's presence in pastoral care was a common theme in the pastors' answers to this question. Pastors look to the Spirit for discernment of both the content—*what* to say to people—and the timing—*when* to say it, as well as *when* to be quiet and allow space for God to work. Pastors recognize that the Spirit is at work and allow God to bring about the transformation in the person. Another pastor related the importance of trusting that the Spirit is present as "it takes courage to care as we don't have all the answers and might wonder, do I have the right to be caring for this person?" Another pastor replied, "There is a need for a good

community referral base,” particularly mental health counselors or other professionals, such as physicians, attorneys, counselors, coaches, spiritual directors, and many others. Pastoral care is sometimes getting the person in the right place to help them through their particular crisis, so that they are given the best opportunities to make good decisions.

Other answers to question seven were,

1. That a mental health degree would be helpful to blend with a Master of Divinity.
2. Just loving people where they are and not pressuring them to be spiritual.
3. Reading good literature, particularly novels, is where people can see themselves.
4. That pastoral care ministry needs to be shared with the congregation.

One of the pastors shared that reading good literature is a way for people to see themselves and life’s struggles without having fingers pointed at them. Self-realization comes through the lens of someone else’s struggle and solution or failure. In a related way, knowledge of God and knowledge of self are intertwined. As John Calvin wrote, “Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Our wisdom, insofar as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other.”² Pastoral care should be shared with the congregation. There is something significant about the body of Christ caring for one another. Illustrative of this is that of the pastors interviewed, four or 40% served in congregations that had a Stephen Ministry program, training laity to care for fellow congregants.

Question 8: How did you learn or gain that knowledge or skill?

Five pastors, or 50%, indicated that mentorship, internship, CPE or a Doctorate in Pastoral Counseling were the means by which they gained knowledge and skill for good pastoral

2. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeil (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 1.1.

care. Three, or 30%, indicated that they had taken continuing education related to pastoral care. One pastor said he gained this skill through self-introspection and reflection, without any further education or training. One pastor identified intentional spiritual direction as being helpful in seeing where God is at work in his life and in self-discovery. Finally, one pastor, who did not have any mentoring or continuing education, believed he had been gifted with skills in pastoral care that enabled him to pick up on clues and issues by listening intently to people's stories. All of the answers to question eight highlighted the importance of knowing oneself, being mentored, and learning more about specific topics in order to improve their pastoral care skills.

Question 9: Have you attended continuing education for pastoral care?

Question 10: Who offered it and what was it like?

Question 11: Do you see a need for continuing education or mentored ministry in pastoral care?

Eight of the pastors, or 80%, have attended continuing education courses on pastoral care, and two, or 20%, have not. Of those that said continuing education or mentoring were important,

1. One identified the importance of continuing education in pastoral care.
2. Two identified the importance of post-seminary mentored ministry.
3. Five identified the importance of both mentored ministry and continuing education.

Of the two that did not take any continuing education courses, one designed such courses and the other, who felt he was gifted in pastoral care, didn't see the need.

Question 12: Is there anything else of importance to pastoral care that you think I should know?

There were a variety of narrative answers to this question. Six, or 60%, of the pastors gave answers that alluded to being in relationship as well as being open and vulnerable with people in order to offer good pastoral care. These pastors felt that good pastoral care depends

upon being authentic and reflecting God's love. Two, or 20%, of the ten pastors also commented on the importance of knowing the difference between pastoral care and pastoral counseling in that, it is important that pastors know when they need to refer people to professional counselors. One of the pastors, who serves as a law enforcement chaplain, felt the need for more specific training in order to provide better care. Specifically, he has taken four educational mental health courses in order to be able to address some of the specific issues that he confronts in his ministry.

Another narrative comment to question twelve was that pastors see a lot of suffering and trauma, especially in chaplaincy and in larger congregations. This can have a cumulative effect on their personal life. Another pastor spoke of suffering and life experience having an impact on his ministry. He has had ten surgeries and had to retire early due to a neurological disease that will ultimately cause his untimely death. In his experiences and his use of spiritual direction, he has come to realize that open-ended questions are important. He also acknowledged the importance of honesty when confronted with the why questions, especially the questions that ask why God caused/allowed certain things to happen. According to this pastor, in the midst of the why questions it is more important to ask *where* God is, in the situation, rather than an answer to the *why* this is happening. Additionally, in knowing how much God loves him, he's been overwhelmed in the difficult places of his life, and this has provided hope for him. It is this love he seeks to reflect to his parishioners, in order that they also may experience the hope that God gives his people.

One pastor also spoke about the value of working in the corporate world before becoming a pastor. Such first-hand knowledge of the corporate world provides the pastor with a realistic view of the life, circumstances, and needs of their parishioners.

Another pastor keeps a log of his daily interactions with his parishioners. It has helped him to remember what is going on in people's lives and, so too, be able to pray for them, to reach out to them, and to ask them later about the situations. It helps him to make connections with his parishioners, guide his care ministry, as well as providing direction for needed sermon series and Bible studies.

One pastor said, "Rather than look at programs and preaching we need to be more focused on the Word and relationships. These are the most important areas of pastoral ministry and have long lasting effect in people's lives." The relationships in ministry and the encounter with Scripture are the places where spiritual growth happens for people. This pastor feels that the Word of God gives parishioners the promises and presence of God that provide hope. The pastoral relationship shows them that they are not alone in life. Someone listening to them and caring for them is important to reflect God's love when parishioners can't see him this side of heaven.

In summation, these pastors' responses affirmed the importance of pastoral care and emphasized the earlier definition of pastoral care developed from the witness of both Scripture and theological literature (chapters two and three). Pastors point people to God by reflecting Christ to their parishioners amid the various circumstances of life. The Holy Spirit is present and at work in pastoral care. The pastor reflects the attributes of God through the extension of love, grace, forgiveness, mercy, caring, compassion, kindness, sympathy, empathy, encouragement, confrontation, and truthfulness. In so doing, the pastor utilizes prayer, Scripture, dependence upon the Holy Spirit, as well as providing needed assistance in specific situations. Pastoral care happens "along the way," and encompasses all aspects of ministry. Self-care and shared ministry are important aspects of pastoral care, and it is important for the pastor to know themselves.

Finally, continuing education or mentoring are important for pastors to hone their skills and continue to grow in providing good, biblical pastoral care.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PLANS

Introduction

Through my study and research, I have developed a more comprehensive definition of pastoral care, arrived at two specific conclusions about the gap in providing good pastoral care, and enhanced my personal ministry of care. In addition, and quite unexpectedly, another area of exploration came to my attention because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of pastoral care ministry had to shift to telephone care, driveway visits, and online experiences. This is certainly not the best way to provide care, but pastors must be creative in their ministry and think outside the box when normal life and routine get interrupted by unusual circumstances.

Pastoral Care Defined

The original definition of pastoral care in this thesis-project was “to help people see and experience Christ in the breadth of life, both positive and negative, in good times and difficult times.” It is not an easy task to provide a short, comprehensive definition of pastoral care in one sentence. I realized through reading and research that this definition, while comprehensive, was lacking the depth and breadth that included the specific motivations for care and the methods of practicing good pastoral care. The vast insight that this thesis-project taught me is that Scripture, theology, literature and the pastoral interviews all came together to define good pastoral care and demonstrate its importance in ministry.

I now define pastoral care with reference to the Scriptural images and roles of the pastor, as well as the ways in which they care. The most prominent images in Scripture and literature are the shepherd, the priest, and the counselor. Jesus modeled pastoral care in all of his

relationships and encounters as he extended love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, caring, compassion, kindness, sympathy, empathy, encouragement, confrontation, honesty, faith, obedience, trust, and restoration. Modeling their care after the example of Jesus, the pastor's care is one in which they "dispense God's grace" as they listen to and understand their parishioners.¹ In reflecting Christ and his attributes, pastors point the parishioners to God, and help them recognize God in the midst of their lives and circumstances.

Another practice of Jesus that is beneficial in pastoral care concerns the manner in which Jesus asked and answered questions. Jesus did not shy away from people's questions of faith and he asked questions of them in order to assist them in discerning their own motives for behavior, conclusions about God and the world, and direction for their future. At times, Jesus used questions in such a way that others could see the bigger mystery of God. So too, in pastoral care, pastors ask questions to assist their parishioners in seeing and knowing God in deeper and more meaningful ways.

Additionally, Jesus modeled pastoral care in his awareness of himself, of his Father's presence, and of those whom he encountered. So too, pastors need to know themselves, be aware of God's work in their lives and in the lives of their parishioners. This is important, for pastors bring themselves to the pastoral care encounter, even as they represent the presence of Christ and join in God's work.

Jesus' example of going away by himself to pray, be in the presence of God, and to center his ministry in God's is also important in pastoral care. In the midst of being tired or overwhelmed with ministry, Jesus went away by himself to be with the Father. Even in the routineness of everyday life, Jesus would go away to be with the Father. The pastor, too, needs to go away to exercise self-care in order to provide good pastoral care to others. Self-care needs

1. Bruce L. Peterson, *Foundations of Pastoral Care* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2007), 20.

to include sabbath, renewal with God, and self-examination, as well as recreation and play. Jesus also shared ministry with his disciples whom he commissioned to continue his ministry even after his ascension. Likewise, pastors need to allow for shared pastoral care ministry with their parishioners.

With all of this in mind, I find that my initial summary definition of pastoral care is, in fact, a good one, and the succinct definition remains: “to help people see and experience Christ in the breadth of all of life, both positive or negative, in easy times and difficult times.” However, in further explicating this definition, I would emphasize the vital presence of the Holy Spirit, the motivation of love, and the importance of a shared ministry of care within a congregation. Finally, I would add to the definition that it is imperative that the pastor know themselves and be in communion with God as they seek to be faithful reflectors of Christ in providing pastoral care to the flock. In order for all of this to occur, good pastoral care requires that the pastor hone their skills by participating in continuing education and/or mentored ministry.

Mentored Ministry and Continuing Education

A pastor who has designed continuing education courses for pastors said, “Pastoral care is the most comprehensive pastoral discipline, and it has been ignored,” and goes so far to say, “You are risking your pastoral call when you ignore pastoral care.”² This pastor’s words highlight the necessity of seminary classes on pastoral care and also offering mentoring and continuing education opportunities post-seminary. The research in this thesis-project determined that only 2% to 4% of seminary coursework directly addresses pastoral care. Yet, the pastoral interviews revealed that the amount of a pastor’s time engaged in intentional pastoral care ranged

2. Confidential Pastoral Interview, June 16, 2019.

from 25% to 75% of the pastor's intentional ministry. Since pastoral care education in seminaries is provided through both direct pastoral care courses and in limited ways in other coursework, there are two ways in which more pastoral care education could occur. There could be an increase of two or three pastoral care courses required in the Master of Divinity degree programs, or Master of Divinity equivalent degree programs. Another option would be to have a pastoral care focus incorporated into existing courses such as exegesis or ethics classes.

Additionally, the research showed that there was an inconsistency in internship or mentored ministry requirements during seminary, and that the offered requirements did not necessarily involve training in pastoral care. My conclusion from this is that there needs to be a more intentional focus on pastoral care in at least a portion of the mentored ministry units offered during seminary. Since seminary students do not always perceive the deficit they have in providing good pastoral care at the time of graduation, specific pastoral care mentored ministry units and coursework could give them a stronger base of offering good care at the beginning of their ministry. Additionally, since 50% of the interviewed pastors identified the importance of post-seminary mentoring and continuing education opportunities for their care ministry, the vital importance of offering such was another conclusion reached from this thesis-project. There are many ways this could be done—from offering classes to providing a variety of mentoring opportunities to even creating a post-seminary pastoral residency program. The availability of such would serve to close the identified gap between early on and later in one's ministry in providing good pastoral care.

Post-seminary Pastoral Residency Program

The local church is the best place to provide a one-year post seminary residency in pastoral care. In order to provide this educational opportunity, there needs to be curricula and practicums in place. It would be important to consider if other churches already offer a residency program, as these churches could then be a resource in creating curricula, candidate selection process, reading lists, and practicums. The seminaries' mentored ministry staff could also be a resource for designing learning covenants, teaching skills, and practical activities, as well as identifying available literature on creating mentoring and educational opportunities. In order to create a residency program, it would be prudent for one to be familiar with general literature pertaining to education and teaching. Beverly Hislop provides a preliminary reading list of such in her thesis-project.³

An aspect of creating a residency program would be the compilation of a reading list and bibliography for the residents. This would need to include resources dealing with the theological framework for pastoral care, the pastor's self-care, devotional material for spiritual growth, and literature about specific life issues, concerns, and crises that arise in the course of offering pastoral care. The residency program would also include practicums on hospital and home visits, crisis care, chronic long-term pastoral care, Stephen Ministry, healing and wholeness worship, funerals, and grief care. In addition to these, there could be focused practicums dealing with marriage counseling, divorce recovery, addiction, and other issues that surround relationships. Such a residency program could be beneficial to the pastors who partake of the opportunity, the

3. Beverly Hislop, "Women in Pain: The Need to Train Leaders in Effective Pastoral Care" (Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 2005). A few books worth highlighting on Hislop's list: Robert Banks, *Re-envisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Robert W. Ferris, *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change* (Wheaton, IL: Emis, 1990); Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002); *Taking Learning to Task: Creative Strategies for Teaching Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, eds., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

congregation that they serve, and the facilitator of this residency program. This program, by placing an emphasis on the importance of pastoral care, could have an impact on the larger church by generally elevating the quality of pastoral care.

Continuing Education

As with the residency program, the research for this thesis-project also demonstrated the need for continuing education in pastoral care to be both academic and practical aspect. Given the topic of pastoral care, and cognizant of adult learning styles and needs, these courses will need to be interactive in nature. The topics addressed would be determined by the needs of the pastors, based upon their identification of issues not covered in seminary and of issues that are of predominant concern in the communities they serve. In interviewing pastors, continuing educational opportunities that would involve discussion of literature by a cohort of pastors were identified as being beneficial. Such continuing education could be designed to occur in different time frames—week-long, over several days in a month or a semester. This would need to be flexible depending upon the pastors' availability for continuing education. The course could include different facilitators or teachers to provide different voices and different perspectives on topics of ministry. In addition to such continuing education in pastoral care, there also needs to be continuing education in pastoral counseling, and in the pastor's self-care.

An example of such a potential continuing education course for pastors and chaplains would be on suffering, and would address the reality of the context, impact, purpose and outcomes of suffering in people's lives. Course activities would include reading books on suffering, and perhaps, as a cohort visiting places where there have been acts of violence and suffering. For example, the cohort could visit Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston,

SC, or the 9/11 memorial in New York City, or Virginia Tech, or the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. At these places, if possible, there would be conversations with the people who endured the violence, as well as teaching from a professor versed in the theology of suffering.

Personal Ministry Enhancement

In the interview with the law enforcement chaplain, I realized that I am interested in reading more on suffering: how God uses it and how people need to process it. So I have begun compiling a reading list of books on suffering, as well as books about pastoral care, the church fathers and female saints in the early church, and works by Andrew Purves.⁴

In two of the interviews with the long tenured pastors that received mentoring, they had a rhythm to their pastoral duties that they found helpful throughout their years of ministry. This has encouraged me to implement a more structured process for visitation to the home-bound community in my congregation. Unfortunately, in my current ministry, these visits often get interrupted or displaced when crises arise, or I run out of time in the week. So, I will schedule these visits on days that I am not responsible to cover hospital visitation and dealing with the crises that may arise, so that they will occur before the week gets away from me. I will need to

4. D.A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord: Reflections on Suffering and Evil*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Nancy Guthrie, *Holding on to Hope: A Pathway Through Suffering to the Heart of God* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2015); A.E. Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering: A Study on 2 Corinthians* (London: T & T Clark, 1996); Peter Kreeft, *Making Sense out of Suffering* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1986); Charles H. Talbert, *Learning Through Suffering: The Educational Value of Suffering in the New Testament and in its Milieu* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991); Paul David Tripp, *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Jeff Wisdom, *Through the Valley: Biblical-theological Reflections on Suffering* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011); Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale, *Why Suffering? Finding Meaning and Comfort when Life Doesn't Make Sense* (New York: Faithwords, 2016); Andrew Purves, *The Search for Compassion: Spirituality and Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004); Andrew Purves and Charles Partee, *Encountering God: Christian Faith in Turbulent Times* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000); Barbara M. Roberts, *Helping Those Who Hurt: A Handbook for Caring and Crisis* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009); Paul Tournier, *A Listening Ear: Reflections on Christian Caring* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987); John W. Frye, *Jesus the Pastor: Leading Others in the Character & Power of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002); David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without all the Answers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012).

be very intentional in keeping this schedule and not allowing the other demands of ministry to interrupt them.

The pastoral interviews determined that self-care is important, especially as it relates to suffering and trauma. It is important for pastors to take time and space for self-care that includes a way to process the difficult events that they experience. This is important so that one's heart doesn't become calloused in self-protection and so that depression doesn't set in and overwhelm their life and ministry. Therefore, I realized that it would be beneficial for me to be more intentional in my self-care as I process the suffering I encounter in my pastoral care. Working in a large church, I have many parishioners who are going through illness, relational issues, and many crises that result in suffering. Having developed relationships with these parishioners, their death and suffering impact my personal life as well as my ministry. Therefore, I believe that spiritual direction and a small group of pastors to process ministry with would be beneficial in my life, both personally and professionally. I have found spiritual direction to be helpful in the past, and in my Doctor of Ministry cohort I benefitted from the input of other pastors in my life, just as they benefitted from my input into their lives.

Conclusion

Defining pastoral care has provided me with a more intentional mode of caring for my parishioners, and an ability to think about what I really desire for them in the midst of life and crisis. I believe the reading, the rhythm of pastoral office, and self-care will be beneficial to my ministry and the pastoral care that I provide to my congregation. All in all, I have found the process of research and study for this thesis-project to be very helpful for my professional life as a pastor. The disciplined time of study and reading, as well as reflection on my own forty years

of caring for people, have produced fruit in my personal and professional life. With the ability to articulate more clearly a theological framework and the growth that has occurred with this thesis-project, I envision myself moving forward with a residency program at my church for graduating seminarians, in order for them to provide good, biblical pastoral care earlier in their ministry than might otherwise happen if they weren't intentional in this aspect of ministry. Additionally, I plan to create a meaningful continuing education event for pastors to grow in their pastoral care ministries.

APPENDIX A
MASTER OF DIVINITY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Seminary	Biblical Preaching	Theology Ethics	Mission History Leadership	Pastoral Care and Education	Electives	Mentored Ministry Internship
Asbury Theological Seminary	10	6	5	2	8	3
Columbia Theological Seminary	8	3	7	2	6	4
Fuller Theological Seminary	10	5	8	2	4	0 But available
Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary	13	5	4	4	6	6
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary	11	6	6	2	3	4 + CPE
Pittsburg Theological Seminary	13	4	8	2	4	2
Trinity Evangelical Theological Seminary	16	5	8	2	4	2
Union Presbyterian Seminary	10	5	8	2	4	2
Yale Divinity School	4	5	4	1	6	400 Hours
Reformed Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist	Information Not available					Yes

APPENDIX B
SEMINARY PASTORAL CARE SURVEY

Age: 25-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66+

Gender: Male Female

Undergraduate/graduate Degrees _____

Field of employment prior to Seminary? _____

Years of employment in this career? _____

How many courses of pastoral ministry were required in seminary? _____

How many pastoral ministry courses did you take? _____

Were you required to take Mentored Ministry or CPE for seminary/ordination?

Yes No

What denomination is your ordination? _____

Date of graduation and degree from seminary? _____

How many years in ministry post-graduation from seminary? _____

What is or do you think your main focus of ministry will be? _____

How much of your ministry do you think will be providing pastoral care?

10-20% 20-30% 30-40% 40-50% Over 50%

How prepared do you feel to provide pastoral care in your setting?

Not at all Somewhat Adequately Very Prepared

What areas of pastoral care do you feel might be missing for your ministry context?

Do you see a need for continuing education in pastoral care of the congregation?

Yes No

APPENDIX C
SEMI-STRUCTURED PASTORAL INTERVIEW

1. How many years of ministry?
2. Year of graduation from seminary and degree?
3. Post seminary graduate Degrees? If yes, what is the degree?
4. What percentage of your ministry is pastoral care?
5. Do you have a working definition of pastoral care? What is that definition?
6. What do you hope to happen in the midst of pastoral care?
7. What do you know about pastoral care now that you wish you had known early on in your ministry?
8. How did you learn that skill or gain that knowledge?
9. Have you attended continuing education for pastoral care?
10. Who offered it and what was it like?
11. Do you see a need for continuing education or mentored ministry in pastoral care?
12. Is there anything else of importance to pastoral care that you think I should know?

APPENDIX D

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Addiction/Codependency/Emotions

Augsburger, David W. *Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979.

Beattie, Melody. *Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself*. New York: Harper and Row, 1987. This book is good for so many people who struggle in relationships that have addiction in their nature.

Cloud, Henry, and John Townsend. *Boundaries*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992. This book helps you see the positive aspects of having and maintaining boundaries in healthy and loving relationships.

Lerner, Harriet G. *The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships*. USA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985. This book looks at anger, particularly how women experience anger and ways to change behavior patterns.

Dementia/Special Needs

Grant, Lewis. *God's Choice: A True Story of Heartbreak and Joy*. Bloomington, Indiana: Author House, 2010. This book is autobiographical and is about his daughter who has Down's Syndrome and his wife who is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. It isn't necessarily spiritual or does not share the most positive images of how to care, but it is honest and authentic of the struggle.

Groothuis, Douglas. *Walking Through Twilight: A Wife's Illness – A Philosopher's Lament*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2017. This book is an autobiography that is from the caregivers point of view.

Mace, Nancy L. and Peter V. Rabins. *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People with Alzheimer Disease, Other Dementias, and Memory Loss in Later Life*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2006. A good book to look at many of the issues surrounding dementia.

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Smoke, Jim. *Growing Through Divorce; With Working Guide*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1986. This is workbook that helps one going through the divorce process

Divorce Care is a video series that is used in a group setting to walk with people in the midst of divorce and can be lay led.

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Clarke Rita-Lou. *Pastoral Care of Battered Women*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Nancy Nason-Clark. *No Place for Abuse*. InterVarsity, Downers Grove, Illinois: 1991. Nancy Nason-Clark is a great speaker and authority on domestic violence and provides a great insight into the issue.

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Allender, Dan B. *The Healing Path*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 1999.

Cole, Cameron. *Therefore I Have Hope: 12 Truths that Comfort, Sustain, & Redeem in Tragedy*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2018. This is an autobiography of a pastor whose young son dies suddenly and unexpectedly, and the truths he leans on from Scripture in the midst of grief.

Grief Share is a video series that can be lay led for people who are going through grief.

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———. *Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart*. St. Louis, Missouri: Stephen Ministry, 2004.

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. New York: Scribner, 1969. The classic book on death and dying and includes the stages of emotions that might be experienced by people who are terminal, as well as their families.

Stittser, Gerald. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grieves Through Loss*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995. This is an autobiography about significant and unexpected loss of more than one member of a family.

Westberg, Granger E. *Good Grief: A Companion for Every Loss*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997. A great little book that helps you think about the grieving process. There is also a companion workbook for congregational use.

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Mental and Physical Health Diagnosis

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Minirth, Frank and Paul Meier. *Happiness is a Choice: the Symptoms, Causes, and Cures of Depression*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994.

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Pastoral Care Training for Congregation

Haugk, Kenneth C. *Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

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Shame/Guilt/Forgiveness

Augsburger, David. *The Freedom of Forgiveness*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1988. This book takes a good look at forgiveness and what it means and how we can move into forgiveness.

Smedes, Lewis B. *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame we Don't Deserve*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993. Smedes does a good job of differentiating between and shame and guilt and ways to overcome shame.

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sexual abuse and the road to recovery and where God is in the midst of the abuse and the recovery.

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Allender, Dan B. and Longman, Tremper. *Bold Love*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1992. Considers what it looks like to love people in our lives that have caused damage.

Frank, Jan. *A Door of Hope: Recognizing and Resolving the Pains of Your Past Life*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1997. An autobiography of a woman who has survived sexual abuse and is a good first read for people who have endured abuse.

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Arterburn, Stephen, and Stocker, Fred. *Every man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2000.

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Hirsch, Debra. *Redeeming Sex: Naked Conversations About Sexuality and Spirituality*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2015. Debra has a church in California who ministers to folks in the LBGQT community and helps them to grow in faith and life.

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